

# *C*a merry little Christmas to appliqué



Kay Mackenzie

# a merry little Christmas

---

to appliqué

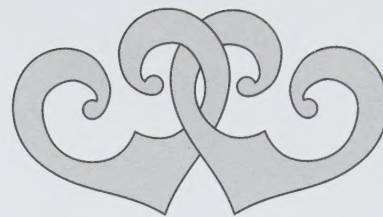
*Kay Mackenzie*

Kay Mackenzie



## Special thanks

To so many people. No one gets anywhere alone. My husband, Dana Mackenzie, who gets design credit this time for making some preliminary sketches for me. He also has no issues with me spending my time quilting, writing, and illustrating instead of practicing domestic skills. What a guy! Willie the papillon (the real quilt puppy) for keeping me company in the studio and pre-approving all of my quilts. Appliqué friends Pam Crooks, Karen Garrett, Renae Gleason, and Janet Locey for turning designs on paper into wonderful holiday projects.



“Work toward perfection, remembering all the while that it cannot be achieved.”

—Quilt Puppy motto

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Resizing Chart .....	4
Christmas Designs .....	5-24
Photo Gallery .....	17-20
Kay's Hand Appliqué Tips .....	25-33
Soft Ornaments .....	34
A Dish for the Holiday Table .....	35
The Particulars .....	36

## Cover quilt by Kay Mackenzie

A Right Jolly Old Elf 18" x 20"

fused, machine appliquéd with a small blanket stitch  
machine quilted by Kay

ISBN-13: 978-0-9725852-4-8

ISBN-10: 0-9725852-4-9

©A Merry Little Christmas to Appliqué

©2005 Kay Mackenzie. All rights reserved. Printed and bound in the U.S.A. First Printing.

Gentle quilter, please note that the right to copy and distribute belongs to the copyright holder. Owners of this book may make copies of the designs for ease of use in their personal projects. Copying any part of this book in any manner to give away or to sell without permission is against copyright law. The designs are intended primarily for personal projects, including gifts. Nonprofit fund-raising efforts using the designs are welcome; please contact the publisher first. Contact the publisher for any commercial use of the designs. The information herein is presented in good faith. However, since the publisher has no control over users' materials, procedures, or skills, no warranty or guarantee of results can be given.



Quilt Puppy  
Publications & Designs

P.O. Box 1241  
Aptos, California 95001  
[www.quiltpuppy.com](http://www.quiltpuppy.com)

For additional copies of this book, ask for it at your favorite quilt shop or go to [www.quiltpuppy.com](http://www.quiltpuppy.com).

# Greetings appliqué enthusiasts!

---

## Your favorite method

There are quite a few ways to appliqué, and many variations within broad categories of technique. Appliquers naturally gravitate toward the methods that work for them and give them personal satisfaction in their results. This little book provides designs for your appliqué pleasure using your favorite methods and your own creative instincts.

The method I enjoy most is hand appliqué. Beginning on page 25 I've included my own personal tips for the way I work, which you may find useful if you appliqué by hand as well or would like to read more about it.

Whether your style is raw-edge, prepared-edge, or needle-turn, fusing or stitching, by hand or machine—a very merry appliqué to you!

## Your quilt design

Make one block or many. Turn them around, mix and match them, choose your favorites and put them together, combine elements in a bigger block. The designs are a variety of sizes in 2" increments, so they all play nicely together. They can also be enlarged or reduced (see the resizing chart on the following page).

When developing your layout, feel free to introduce fillers of your own choosing. A beautiful fabric or a simple pieced block like flying geese might be just the ticket to complement your design.

You can also create fillers by using more or less of the elements in a block. The holly and the string of lights are examples.

Use creativity, and infuse your particular "spirit of the season" into your work. The quilts you make will celebrate your own style and personality.

## Size and orientation

Each design is shown with the **finished** block size around it, plus horizontal and vertical centering lines. The smallest elements are given without blocks around them, and can be sprinkled as you like.

To reverse the block of your choice, choose a mirror-image option on a copy machine, or trace it onto tracing paper with a heavy marker and flip it over.

## Fine details

Fine details can be accomplished using embroidery, fabric pen, beads, or baby buttons. The ties on the Christmas cracker, the poinsettia berries, the string of lights, the steam from Santa's cocoa, and the swirl of the pinwheel cookie are all good candidates for one of these choices.





# Resizing

Below is a chart for enlarging or reducing the blocks. Find the original size on the left-hand side and read across to find the percentage on the copy machine that will resize the block as desired.

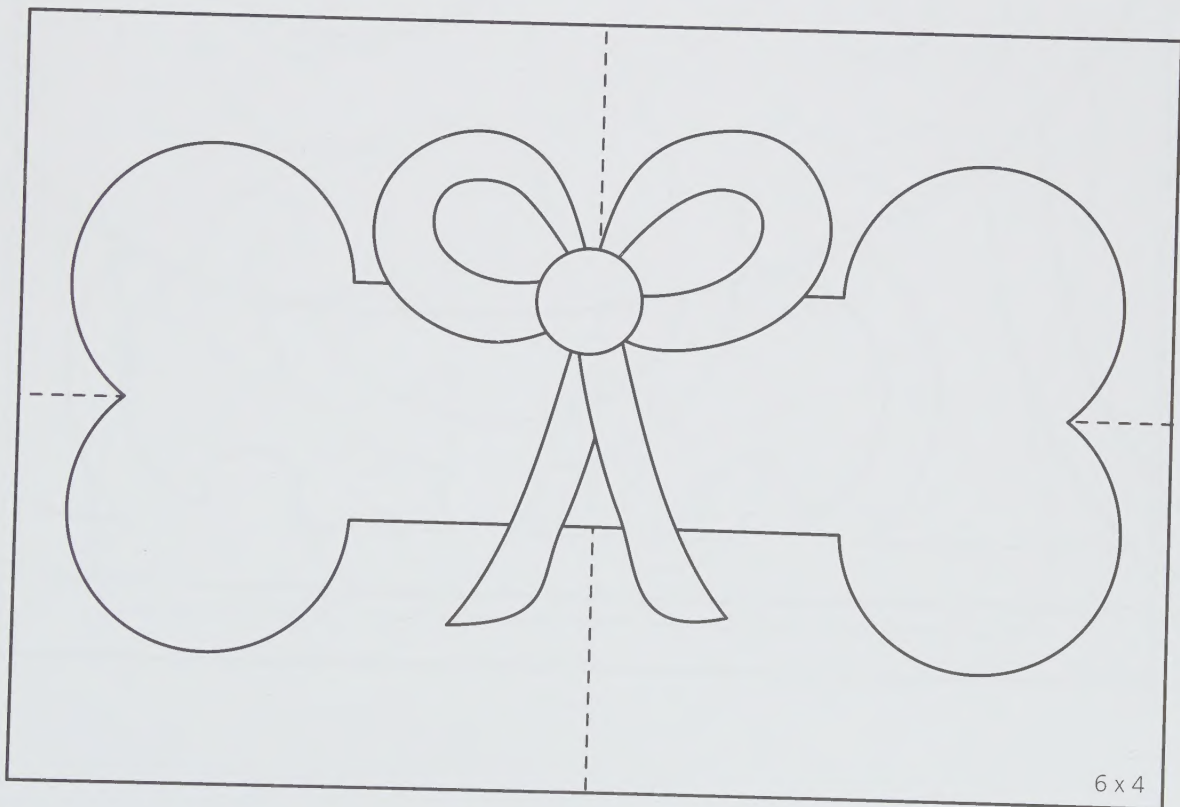
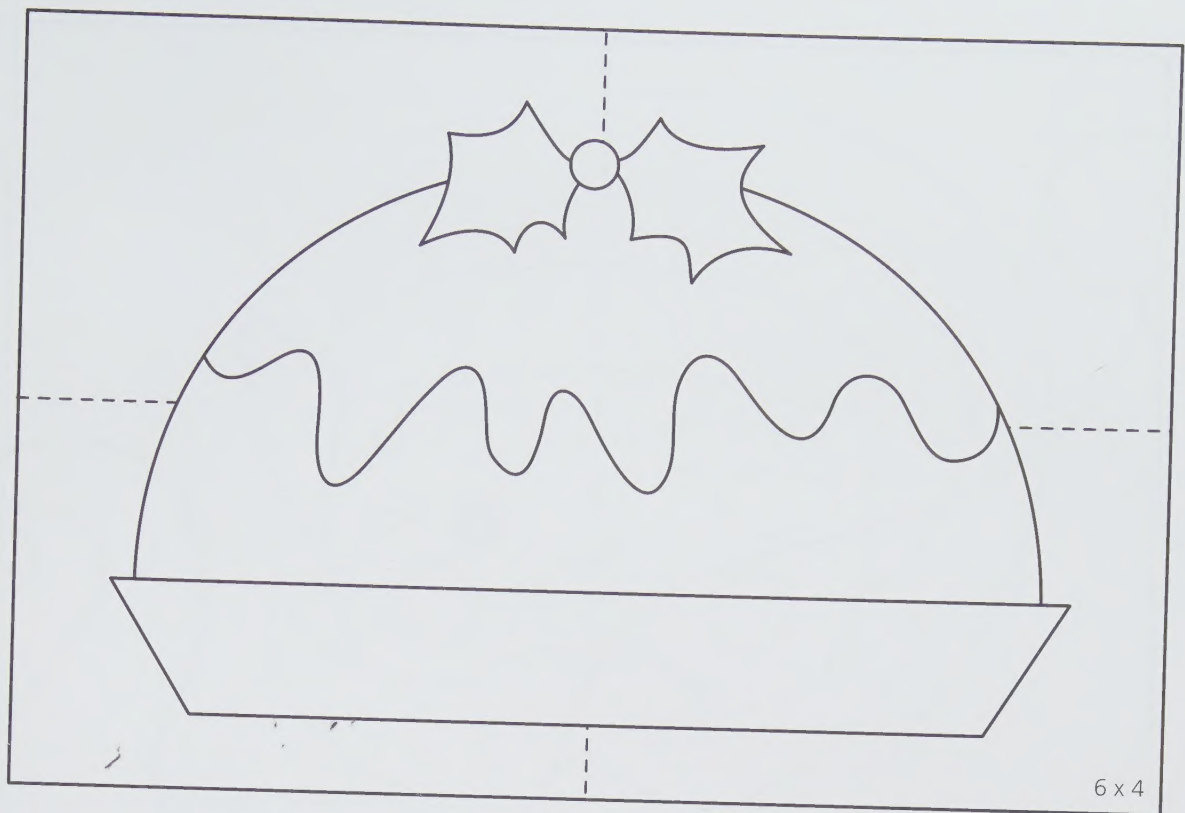
The chart is designed to keep the blocks in proportion and in 2" increments.

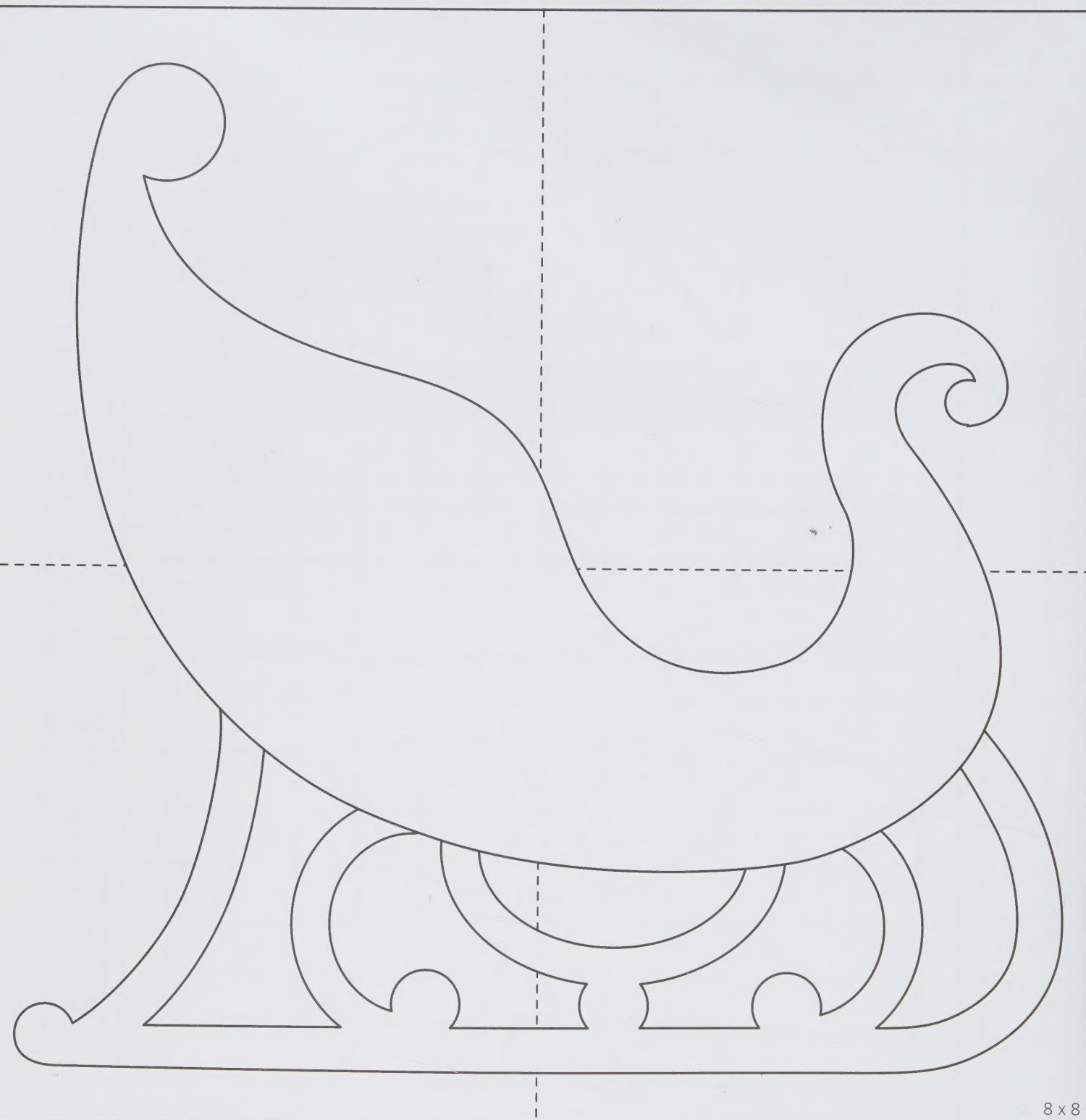
All sizes given are finished block sizes.

To enlarge or reduce, fold the pattern in halves or in quarters, resize each section by the same percentage, then trim and tape the sections together.

Original Size ↓	Desired Size														
	2x4	4x2	4x4	4x6	4x8	6x6	6x12	8x4	8x8	8x12	10x10	12x4	12x6	12x8	12x12
2x4					200 %		300 %								
4x2								200 %					300 %		
4x4						150 %			200 %		250 %				300 %
4x6										200 %					
4x8	50 %						150 %								
6x2												200 %			
6x4														200 %	
6x6			67 %						133 %		167 %				200 %
8x4		50 %											150 %		
8x8			50 %			75 %					125 %				150 %
8x12				50 %											

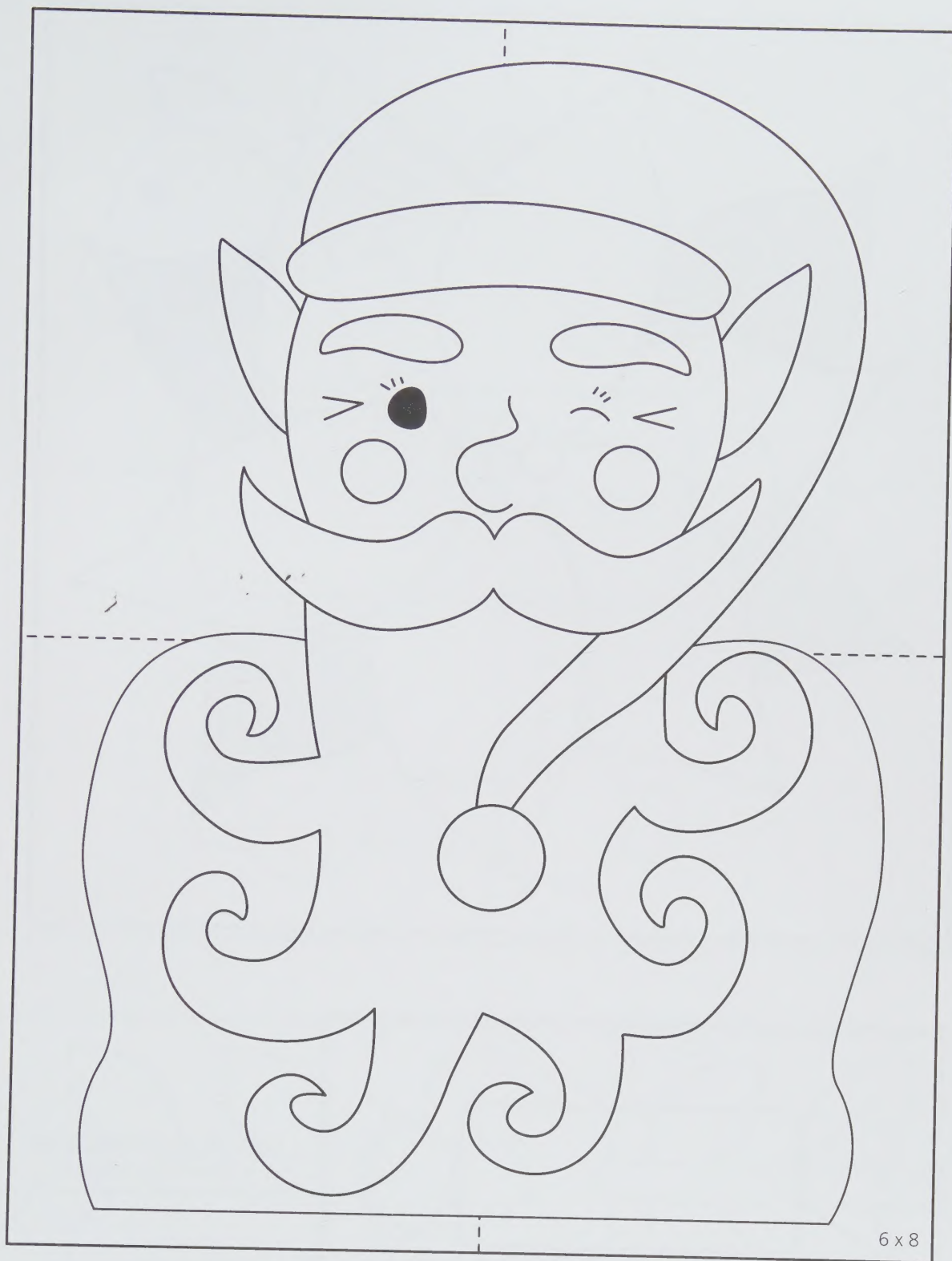
\*Note: If desired, the 8x6 designs can be reduced at 50 % to 4x3; not a 2" increment, but a further opportunity for creative layout design!



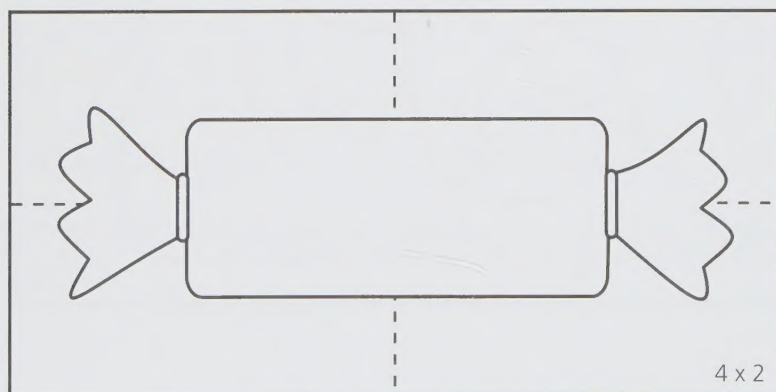
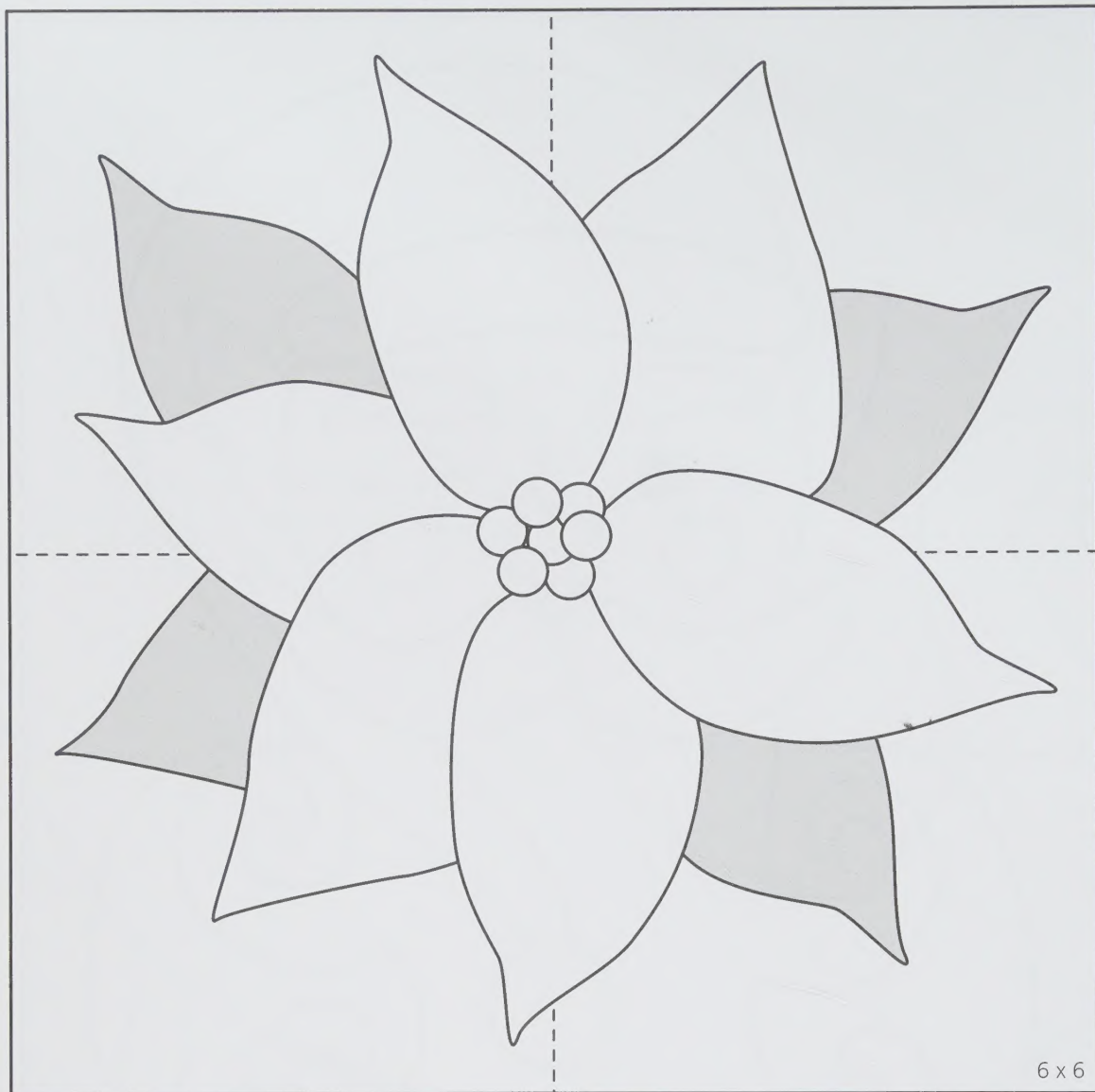


8 x 8

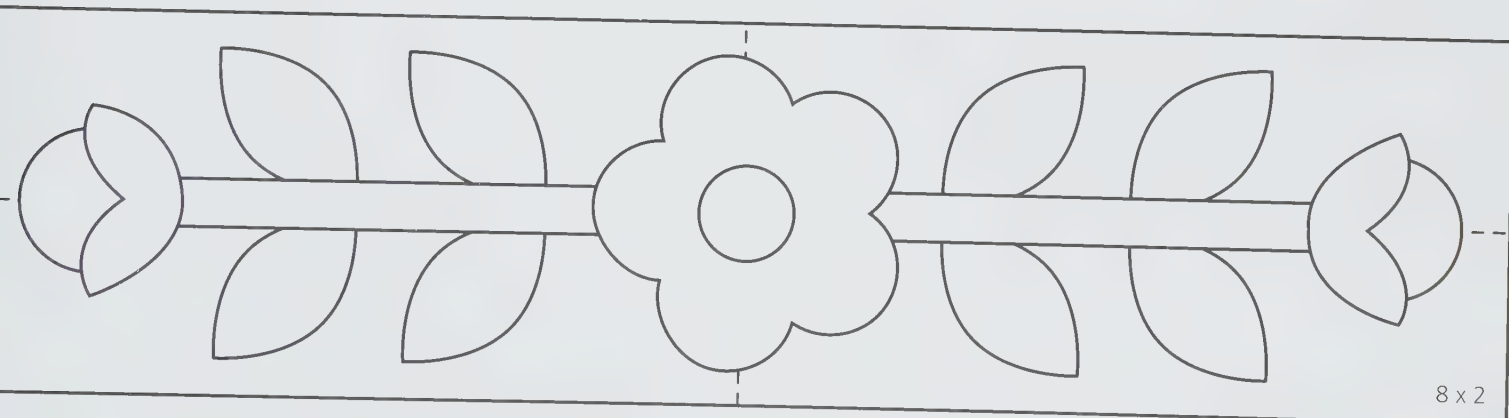
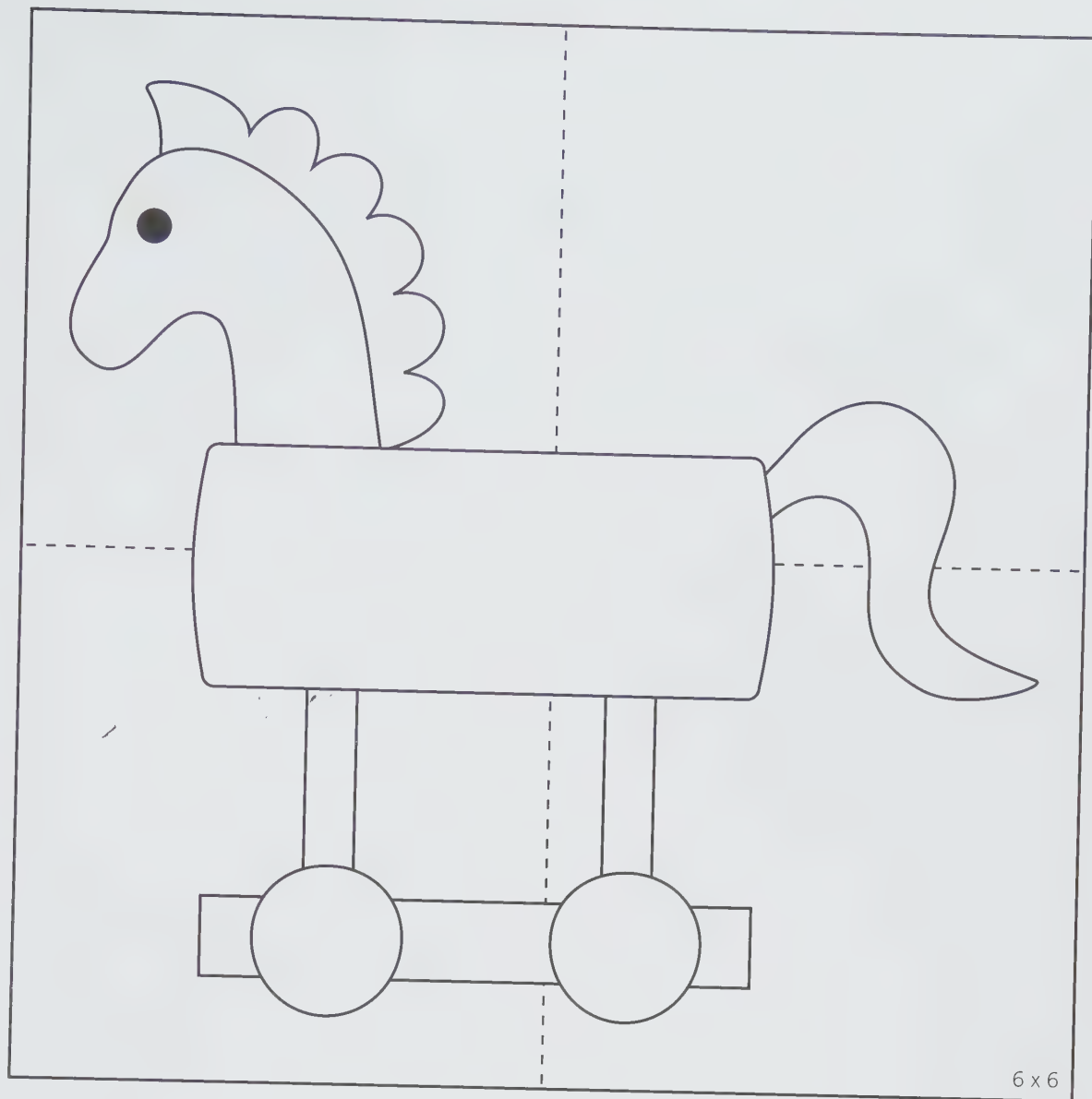




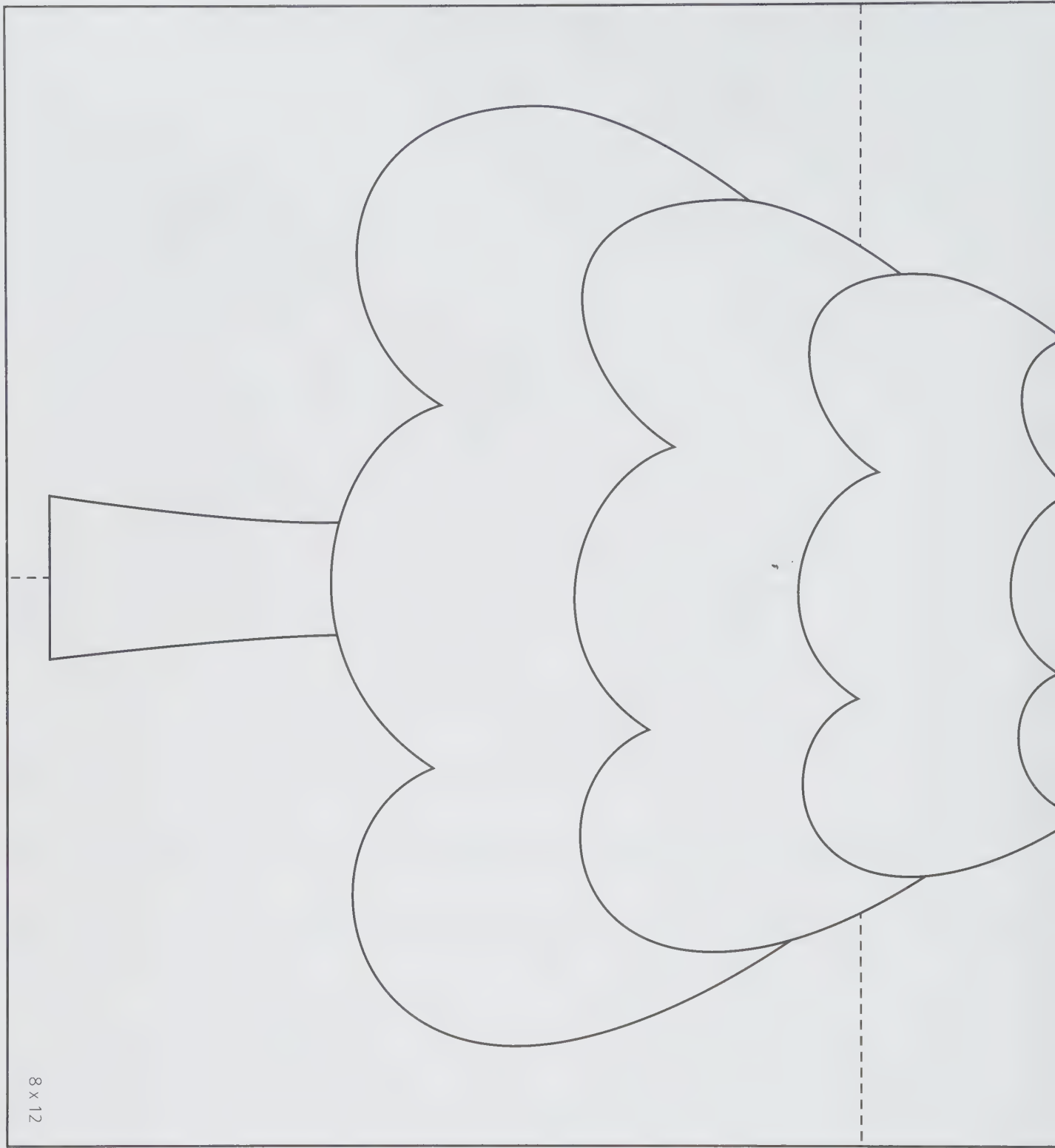




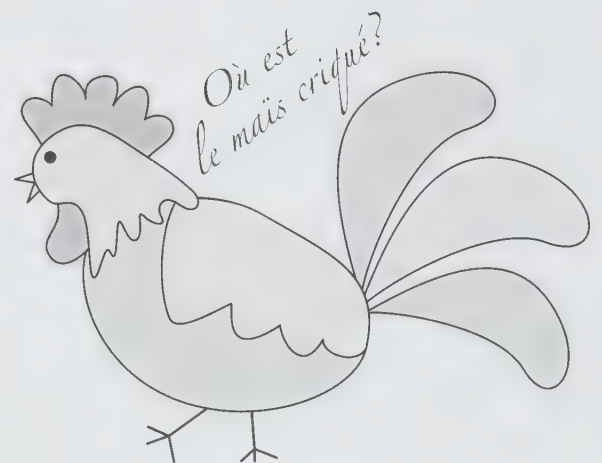
This can be a wrapped gift  
or a Christmas cracker.



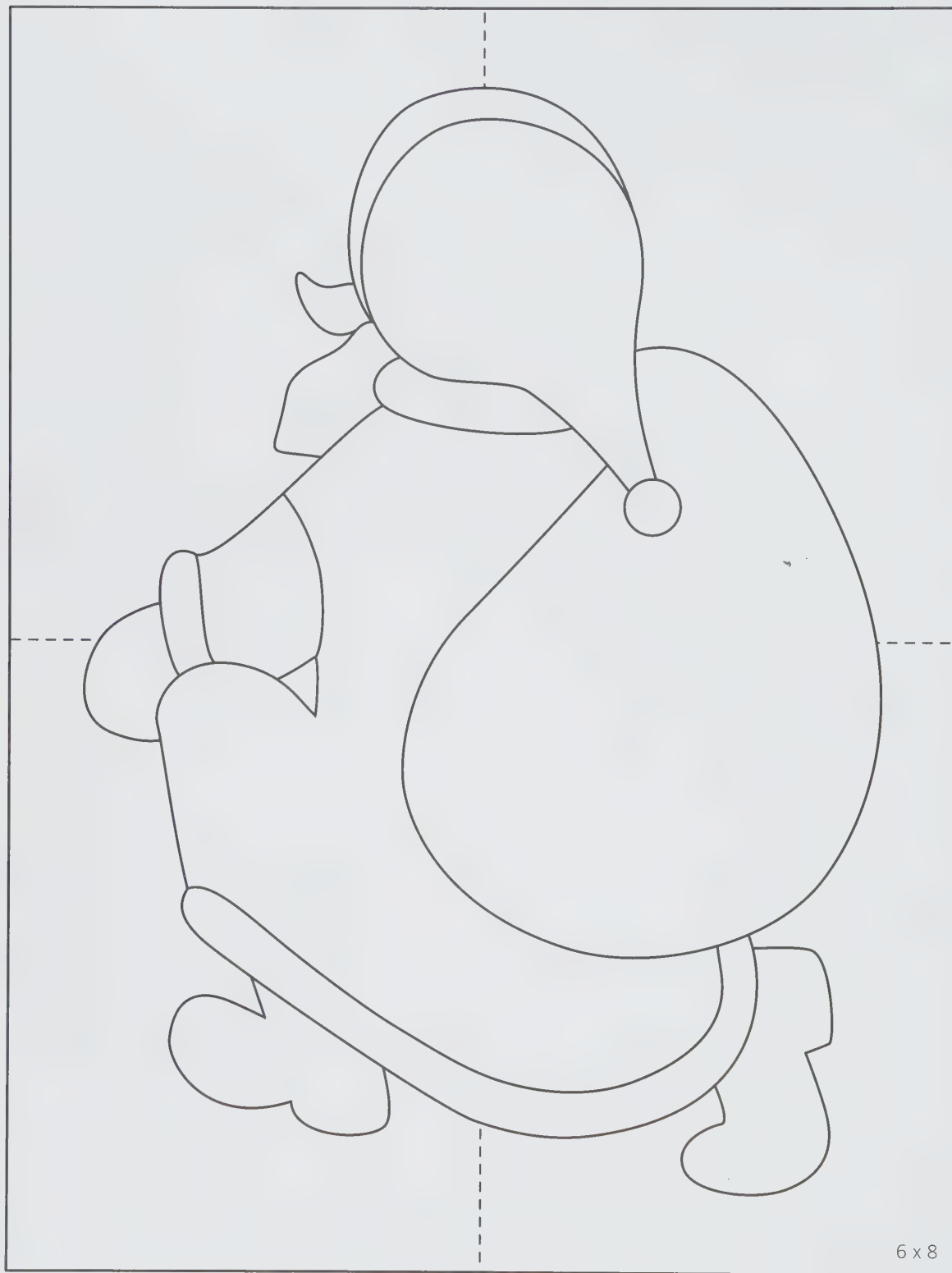


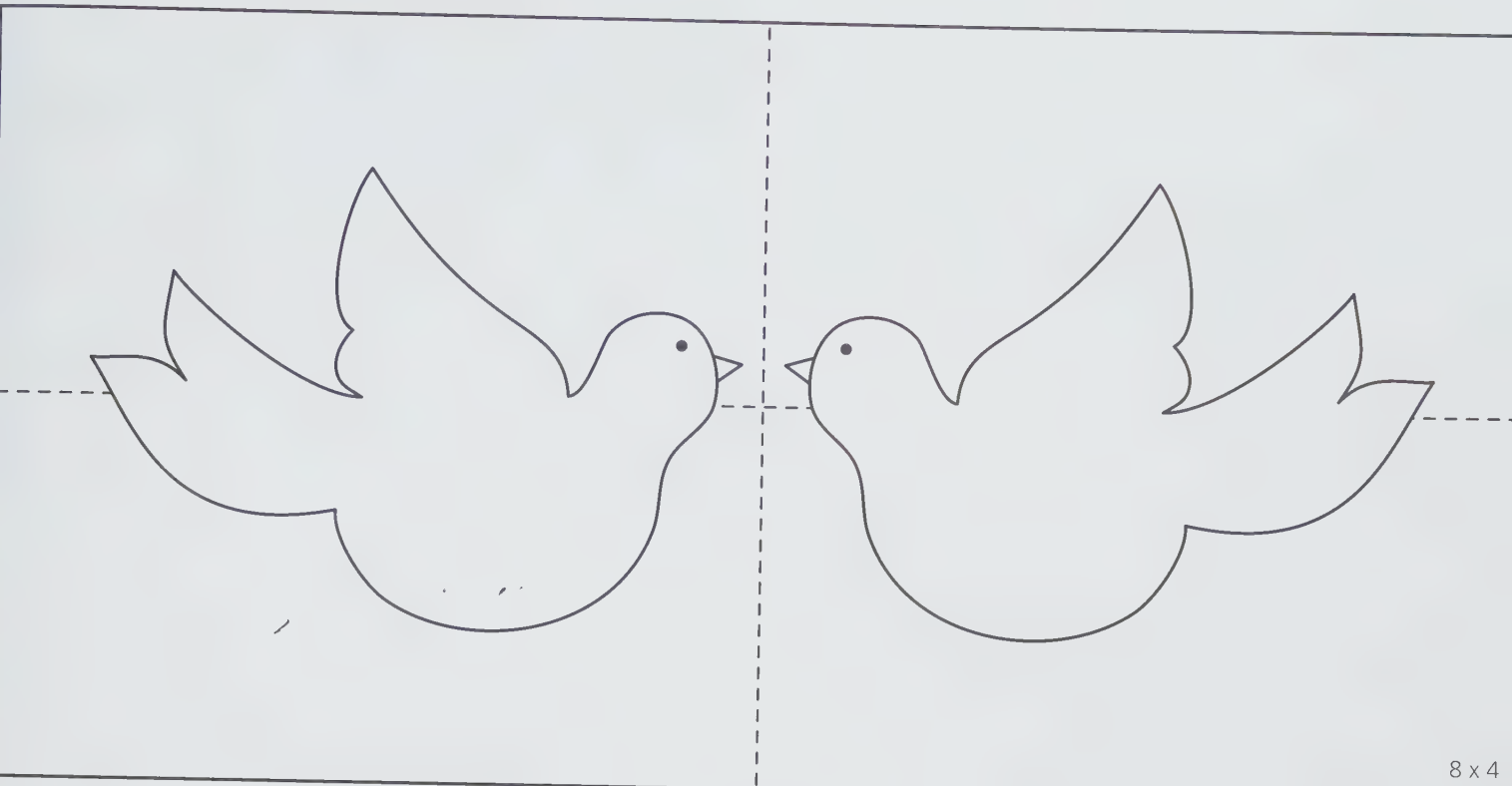


You may wish to decorate the tree with embroidery, ribbons, buttons, or whatever your imagination devises!  
An alternate tree appears on page 22.

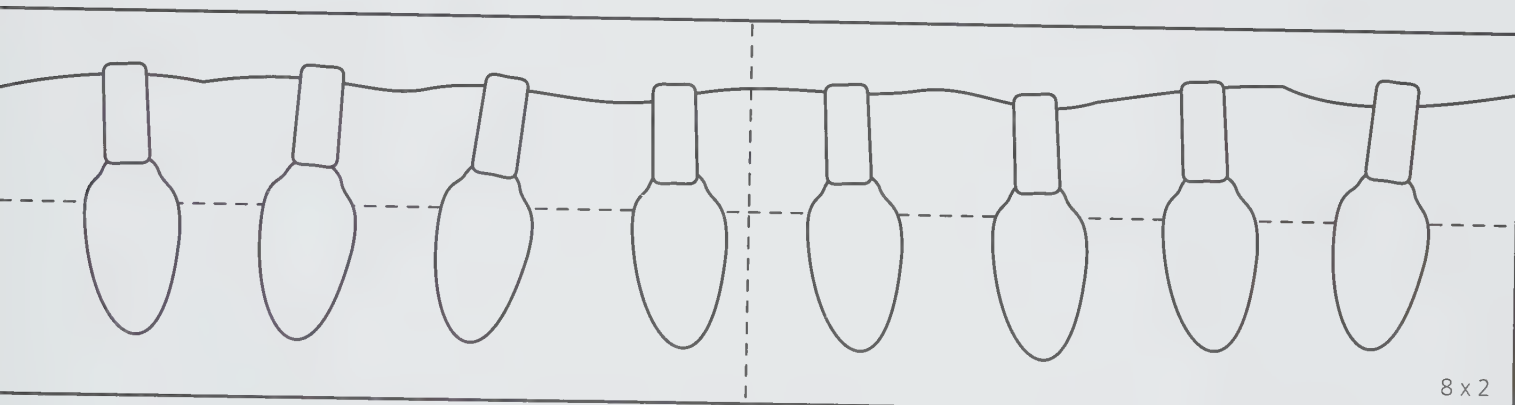








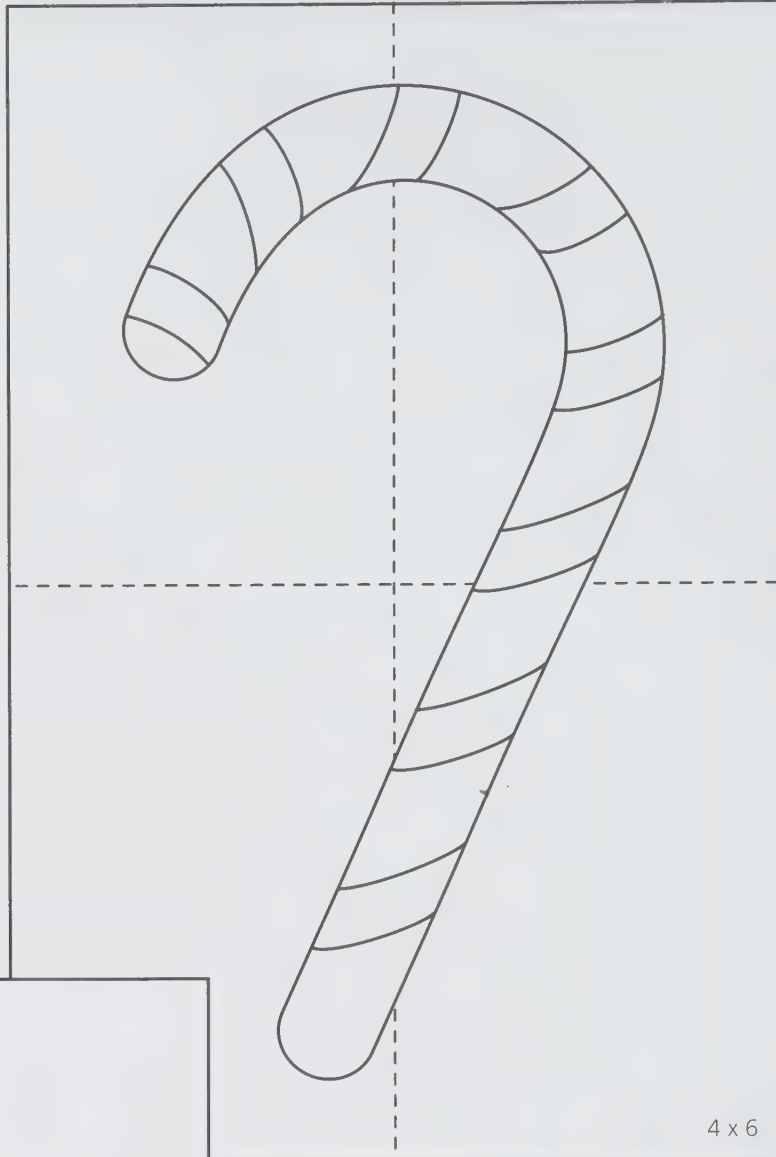
8 x 4



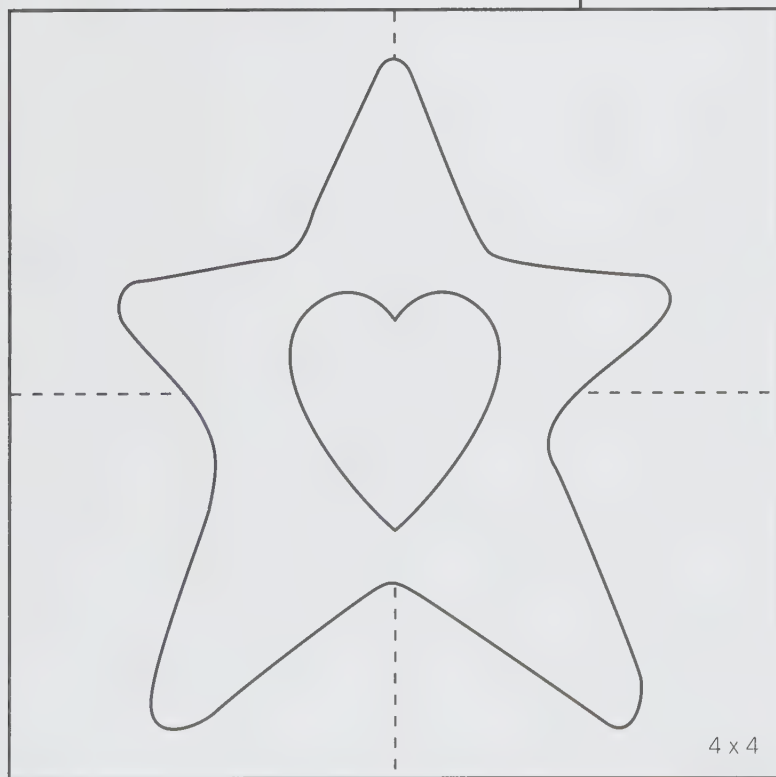
8 x 2



Consider letting a striped fabric do the work. On the bias, it will provide a candy-cane-like effect.



4 x 6

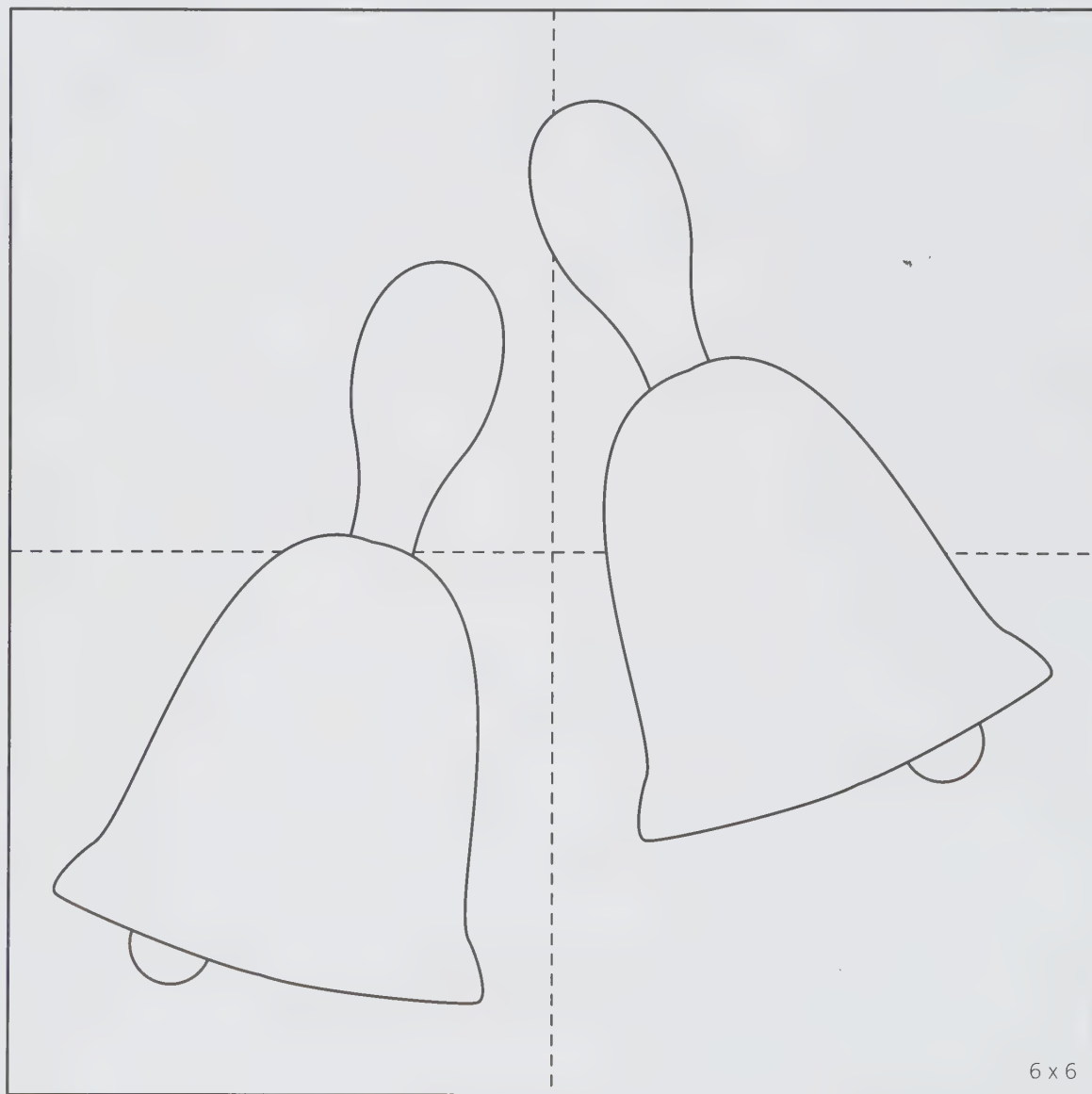
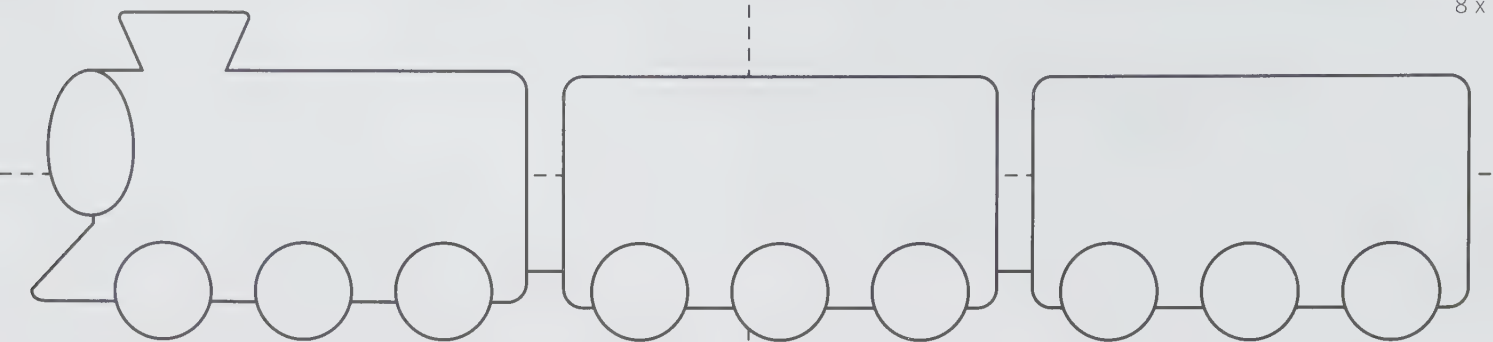


4 x 4



My appliqué friend Janet Locey told me I had to have a chicken in my next set of designs. Here's one-third of the Three French Hens, just for you, Janet! See the very entertaining quilt she made on page 19.





6 x 6



## Happy Christmas to All

by Kay Mackenzie

machine quilted by Kay

24" x 28"

Christmas comes but once a year! I used both hand and machine appliqué for Santa and the cheerful collection of seasonal images that complement his visit. Rickrack, baby buttons, and hand embroidery make up the fine details.





## Crafty Holiday Fun

Renae Gleason made a sprightly mantel cover combining two elements (detail, above). Karen Garrett decorated a Christmas apron with a stylized poinsettia and resin findings (below). Both used fusible appliqué.

These are just some of the ways in which the designs can be used to adorn your Christmas projects. You'll come up with many more! A suggestion for making quick soft ornaments appears on page 34.



## Plum Pudding 14" x 28"

by Kay Mackenzie  
hand appliquéd on a patched background  
hand quilted by Kay  
design enlarged 200 %





## *Santa Stops to Feed the Three French Hens*

by Janet Locey

machine quilted by Janet

34" x 27"

Janet created this dear Christmas Eve scene using fusible web and machine appliqué. The fusible was applied to the edges of the motifs only, with the centers removed. Once the motifs were prepared, Janet positioned them by taping her background fabric over the pattern on a light box. After fusing the entire block, she used a small machine blanket stitch with matching or blending thread.

Janet embroidered the buttons, the berries, and the light string by machine, using a hoop and stitching freehand over marked lines.



## *Poinsettias on Point*

by Pam Crooks

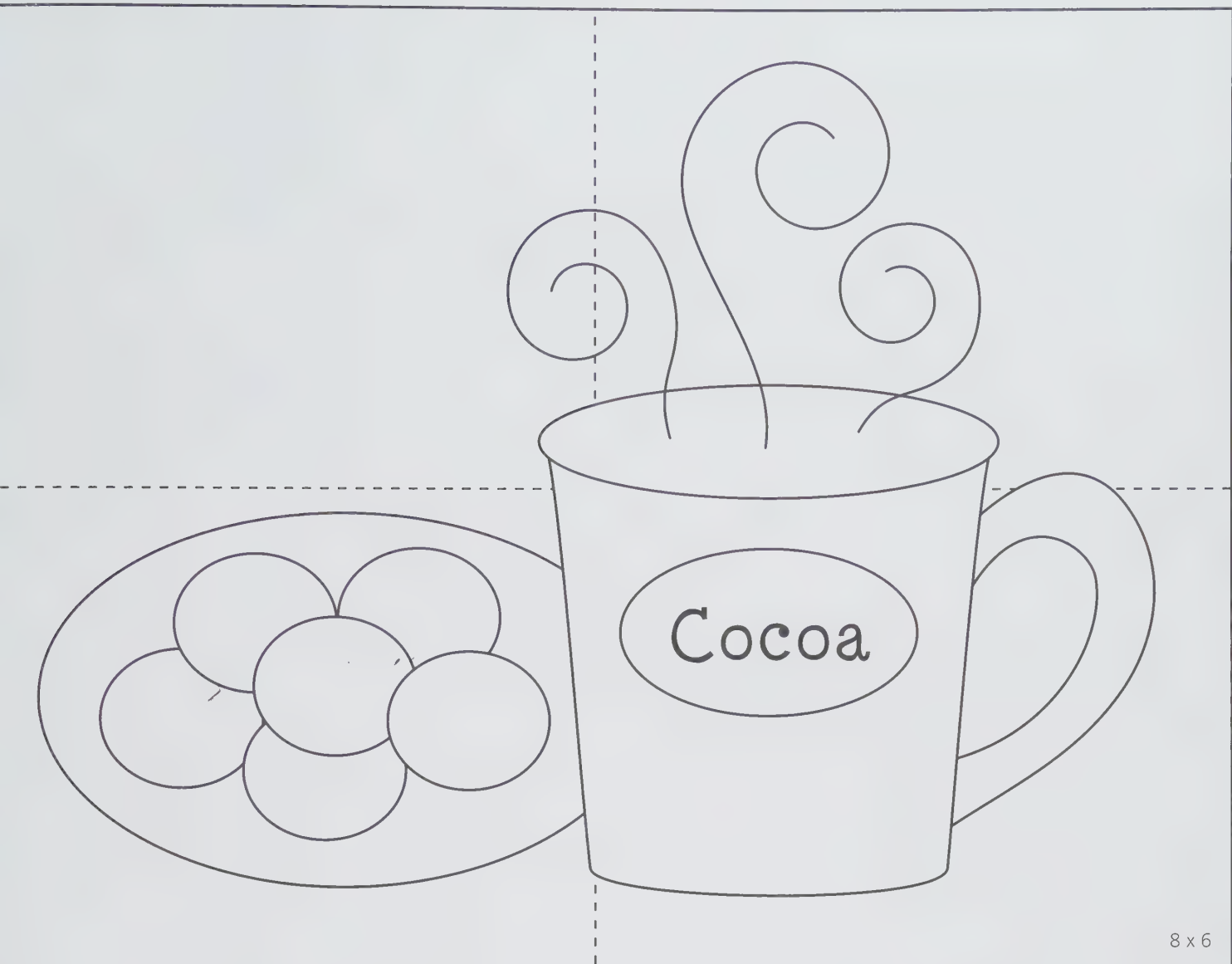
machine quilted by Pam

36" x 36"

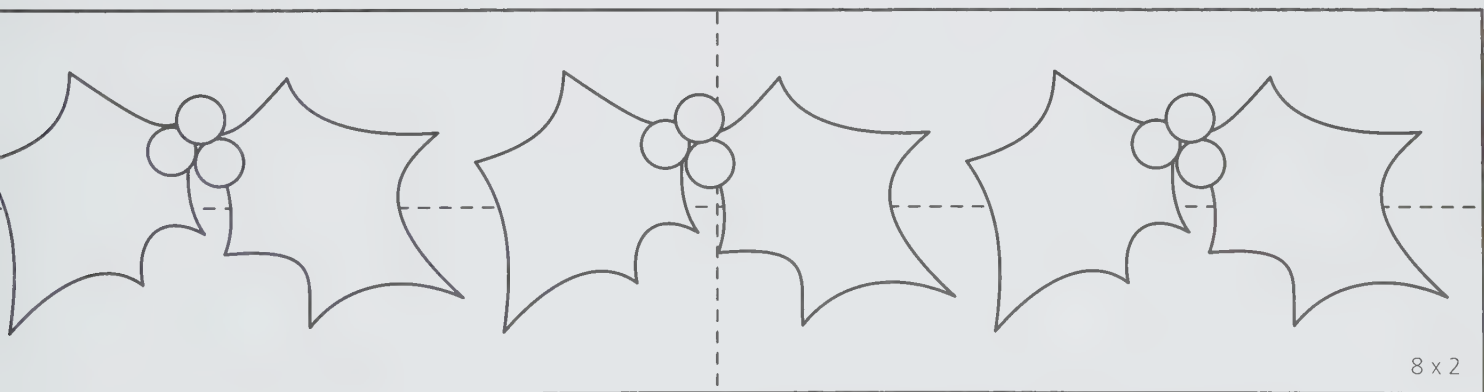
Pam used a prepared-edge hand-appliqué technique for this rich fuchsia batik wallhanging. Using glue to turn the edges of the motifs over reversed freezer-paper templates, she hand-stitched the poinsettias, then soaked the blocks in water to dissolve the glue. The background fabric was opened to remove the templates.

The centers are clever yoyos!

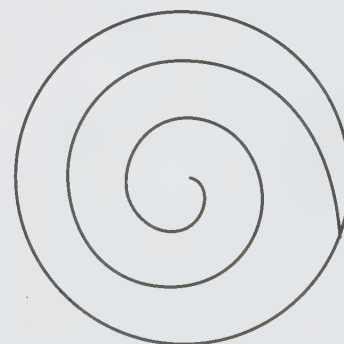
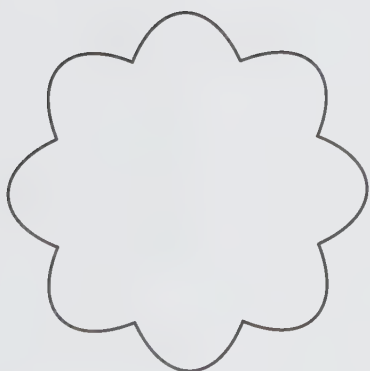
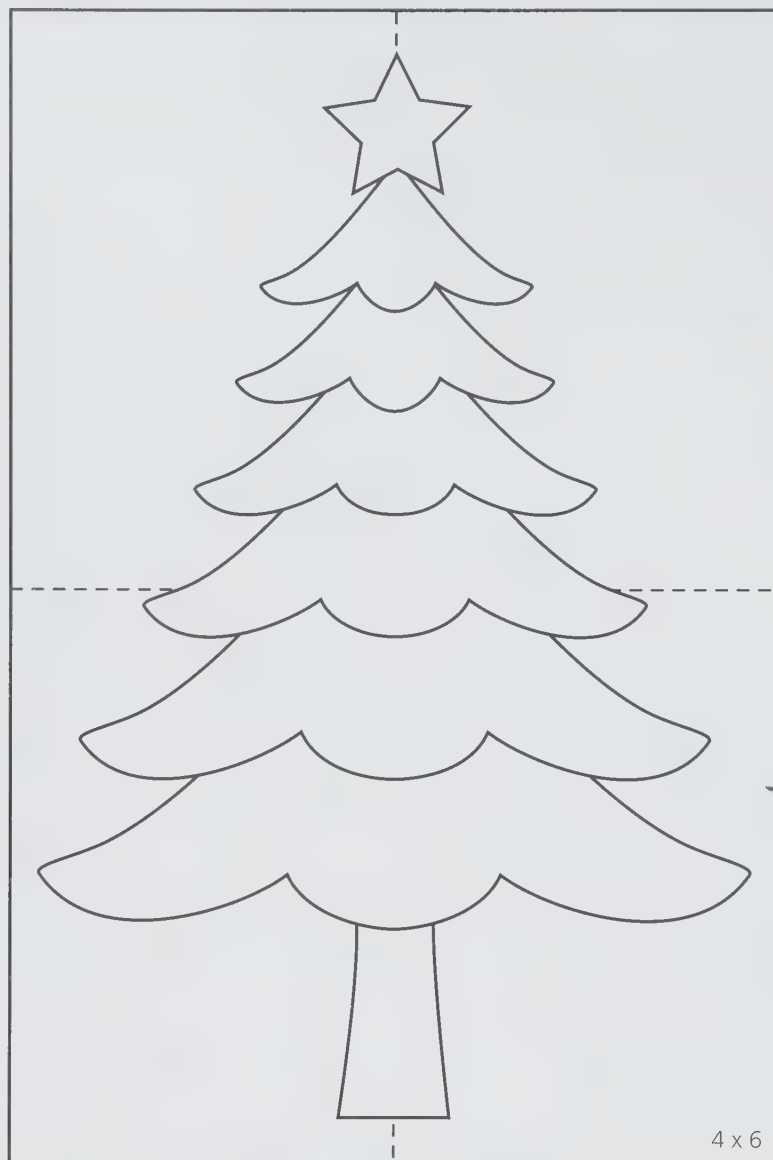




Ink, embroider, or quilt the steam with a contrasting thread.

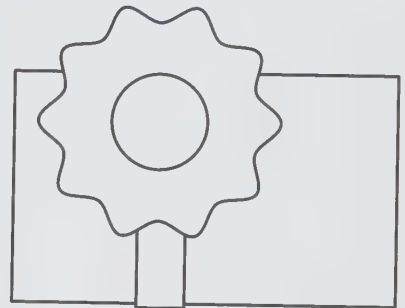
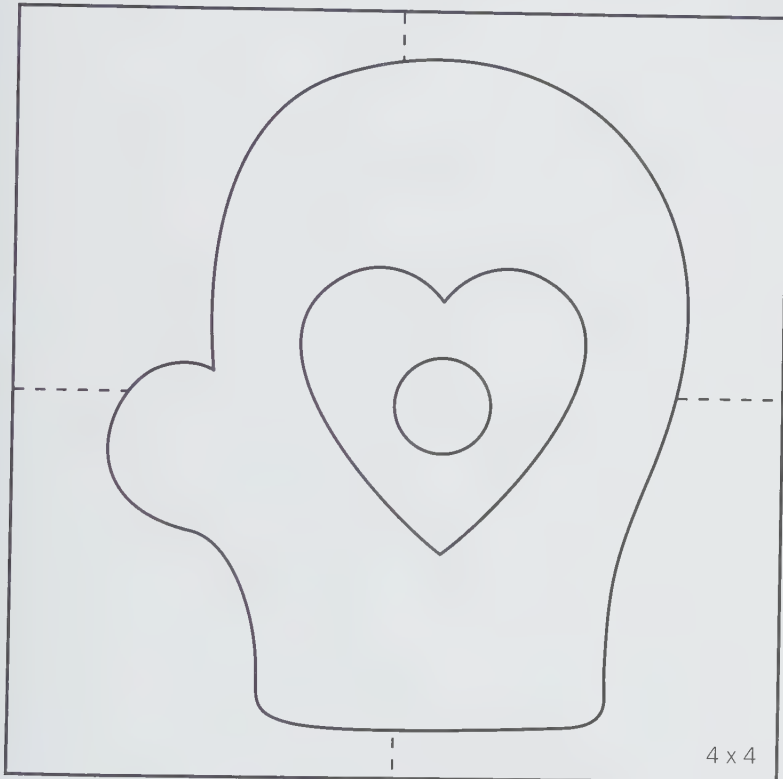
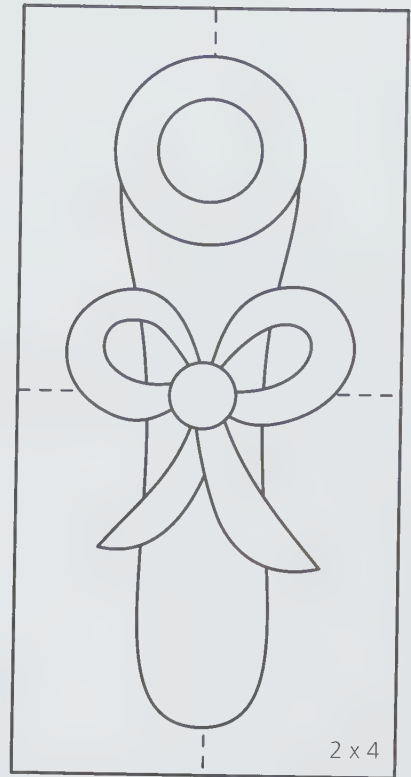
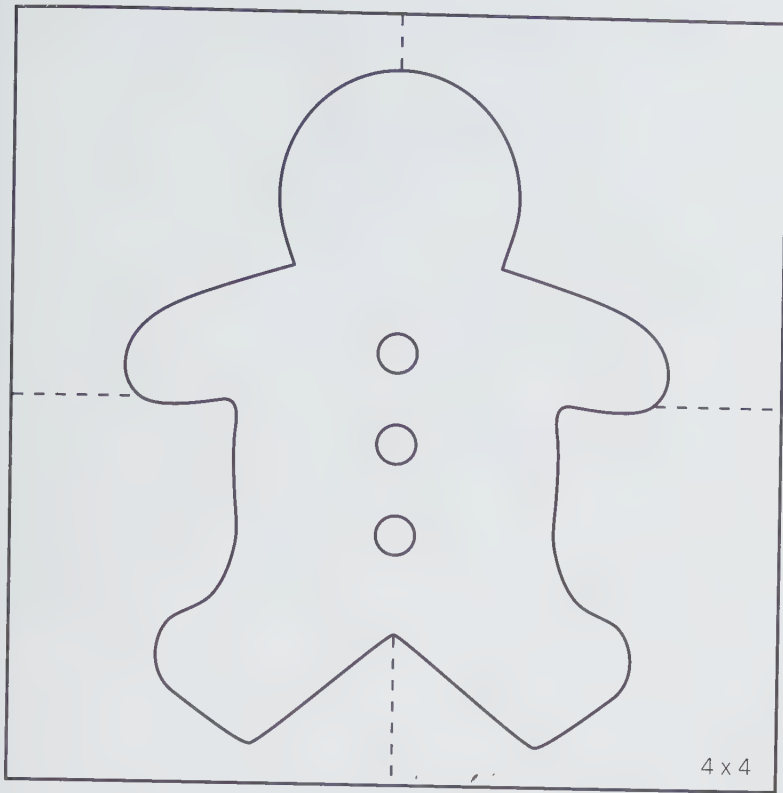


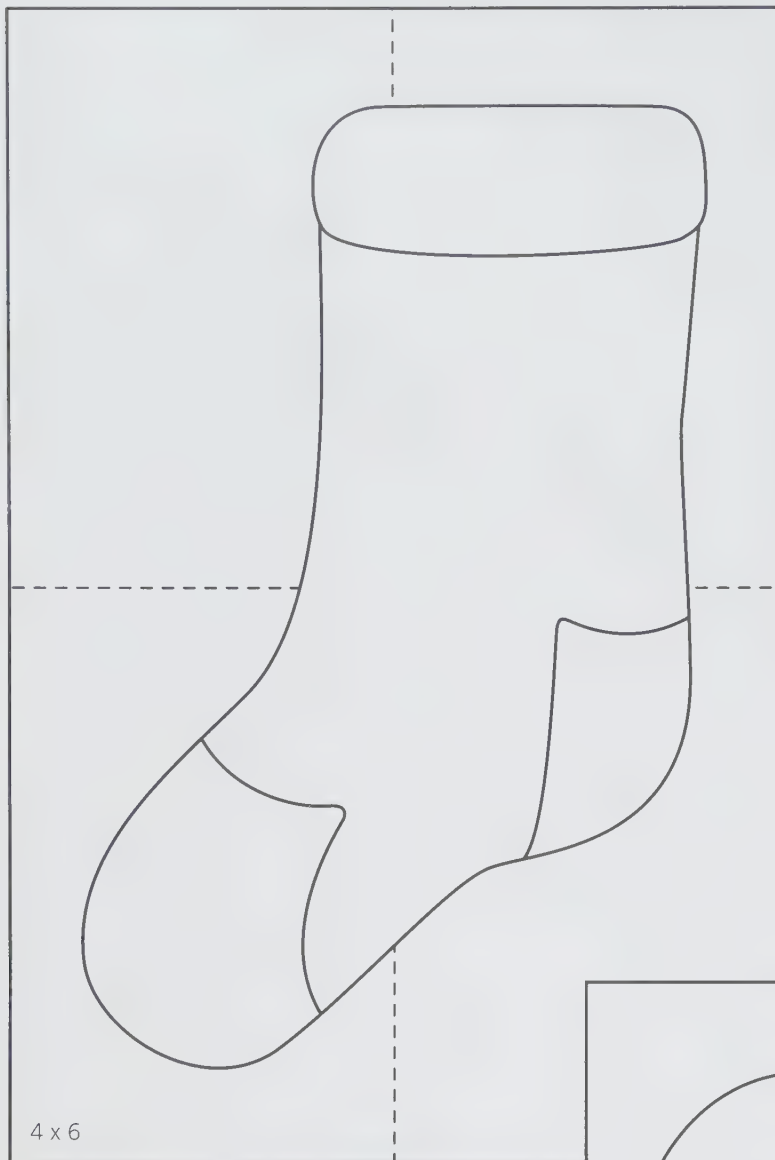
For a 6 x 2 block, use two holly sprigs and move them apart slightly.



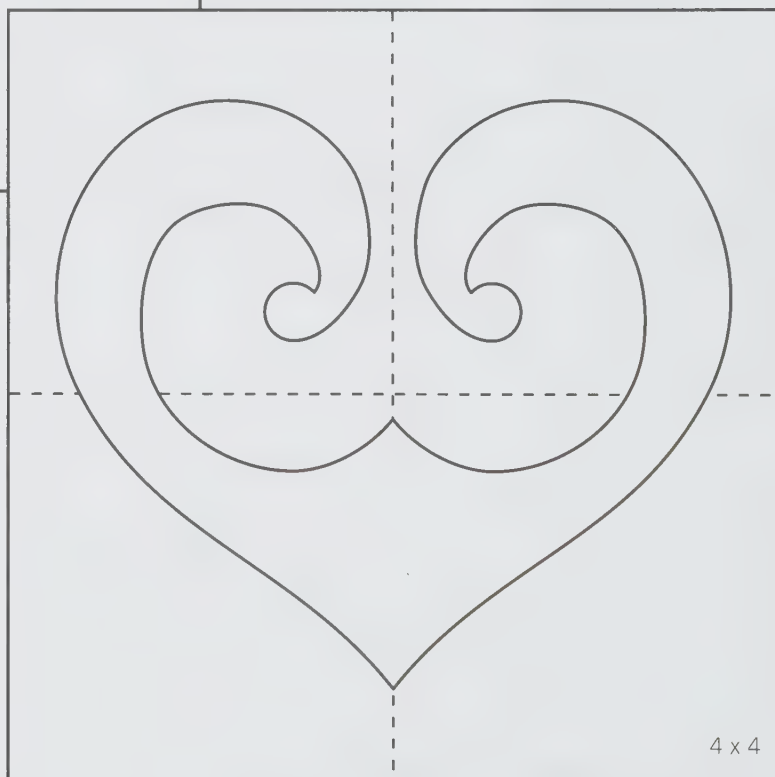
Christmas cookies ready to decorate!







A stocking made of patched-together scraps would be exceedingly cute.



# Kay's hand appliqué tips

Even within the particular method of appliqué known as "traditional needle-turn," there are many approaches and variations. Given here are some notes about the strategies that I employ, which may prove useful if you are interested in hand appliqué.

---

## Fabric selection

Choose 100% cotton fabrics of a medium weight and a soft, pliable hand. Fabrics containing polyester have "spring" and will resist the creasing and turning of the margins. Too-thin or loosely woven fabrics will ravel easily and wear out more quickly. Fabrics found in independent quilt shops are generally of the highest quality and easiest to work with.

Prints hide stitches better than solid fabrics. If you'd like to achieve the overall look of solid colors, you can use tone-on-tone prints for added depth and glow. If you're happy with your stitching, don't hesitate to use solids if they give you the look you're after.

## Fabric preparation

Some quilters prefer not to wash their fabrics. I like the feel of clean fabric, so I wash it as soon as I get it.

Cut the background fabric a little larger than the unfinished size. For an 8" block (8½" unfinished), cut the background at least 9" square. After the block is completed, you will trim it to the unfinished size.

To create positioning marks, fold the background fabric in quarters and crease the outer edges. You can add small pencil marks in the creases at the very edges of the fabric. Mark each stem or vine with one central line. No further marking is needed. A tissue overlay will serve as a placement guide.

---

## Tools and notions

Use sharp pointy hand scissors, not big shears. My favorite size is 5"; other quilters use smaller embroidery scissors.

Use fine thread that matches the piece being appliquéd (not the background). I use 50-weight cotton two-ply machine-embroidery thread. Others use 50-weight three-ply or 60-weight thread, and still others swear by very fine silk thread. The important thing is to use a fine thread in a natural material. Avoid the polyester thread that comes on the skinny spools. It is not meant for hand sewing.

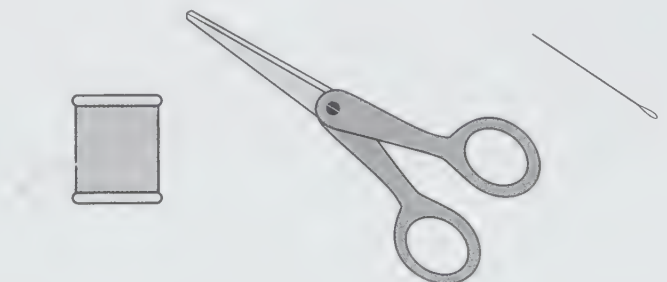
Use appliqué needles. Yes, even if you have trouble threading them. No. 11 straw or milliner's needles (same thing) or No. 11 sharps are excellent choices. Whatever the brand or number, the important thing is that it's a skinny needle that glides through fabric easily without resistance.

## A threading tip

Instead of holding the needle in midair and trying to poke the thread through the eye, try this method.

Cut a fresh end of the thread. Pinch the end between your thumb and forefinger. Slowly open up the tips of thumb and forefinger until the end of the thread is just visible. With the other hand, bring the eye of the needle down over the thread.

Many who swear they cannot thread a needle succeed on the very first try when shown this strategy.



## Vision

If you wear glasses, making sure that your prescription is up-to-date can be very important in getting good appliqué results.

I never needed glasses, but at a certain age I had to admit that I found myself in a situation. Does this sound at all familiar? You can't see the grain of the fabric; you can't find the eye of the needle; you're holding your quilting magazine at arm's length. Gentle quilter, it's time to go to the drugstore and get some of those groovy granny glasses. Pick up a pill bottle and try on pairs until you can read the teeny-tiny writing. Presbyopia, otherwise known as "over-forty eyes," is a natural process that causes a stiffening in the eyes' focusing mechanism, making it difficult to see small things close up. Non-prescription reading glasses magnify the small things and add back details to your vision that you may not have noticed were missing for awhile. This is important for your good appliqué results.

## Lighting

Good lighting goes hand-in-hand with good vision for supporting the success of your appliqué efforts.

If your sewing light is just adequate, make a special effort to arrange for more lighting or lighting that is better directed on your work.

Many quilters enjoy having the compact-fluorescent type of lights, either portable models or goose-neck floor lamps. I like incandescent lighting better. Choose the type of light that makes you feel most comfortable and invest in a lamp for your work area that can be redirected as needed to illuminate your appliqué. A second lamp for taking along to workshops and retreats is very nice to have. Don't forget to pack an extra bulb.

---

## Pattern preparation

Select or design your appliqué pattern. On the outer edges of the pattern, mark the vertical and horizontal centers if not already provided. These marks will correspond to the creases on the background fabric.

Study the pattern to decide the stitching order of the pieces (aka motifs). Begin with pieces that are partially behind other pieces, and build to the front. It's often helpful to number the pieces in sequence on the pattern. You can also make note of the fabric or color you've assigned.

I use a tissue overlay as a placement guide. To create the overlay, trace the entire pattern onto tracing paper. A pencil is fine for this. Also transfer the centering marks. You won't need the numbers or the color notes on the overlay.

Larger sizes of tracing paper are available at stationery or art-supply stores. You can also tape together sheets of tracing paper if needed for larger patterns.

## Template preparation

For motifs other than stems or vines, I use freezer-paper templates. This means no marking on the fabrics is needed. The templates are ironed onto the front of the fabric. You can appliqué with the freezer paper still in place, or you can remove it for a more traditional needle-turn technique. More on that later.

From the original pattern, trace each appliqué piece individually onto the paper side of the freezer paper. To denote a portion of a piece that is overlapped by another piece, use a dashed line. Transfer the numbers and color notes as well.

For multiples of the same shape, like leaves, I usually make a template for each. Some quilters layer and cut multiple templates at once, but you may find more accuracy in tracing and cutting each one individually.

Cut out each template on the drawn line. Where there is a dashed line, cut slightly to the outside of it (so you can see that it's a dashed line).



## Stems or vines

Usually, when an appliqué project calls for stems or vines, I reach for my trusty green gadget—the original Clover® ¼" bias-tape maker. Here are some tips for how I get it to work easily for me.

Cut the bias strip ⅝" wide.  
Cut the top of the strip at an angle upward to the left (it seems to feed through better this way).



Poke the strip right-side-up into the wider end of the gadget until you can see the fabric in the slot on top. Use the tip of a pin to pull the strip through the slot until it sticks out at the narrow end. Pin the strip to the ironing board. Be sure to use a glass-head pin, so you don't have to worry about melting a plastic pin.

Using a hot iron and plenty of steam, pull the gadget along the strip with one smooth, fairly rapid motion, following it closely with the iron. Don't stop part-way through, or try to back up. Smoothness is key.

**Important:** Hold your iron so that the steam vents are not directed at your fingers.

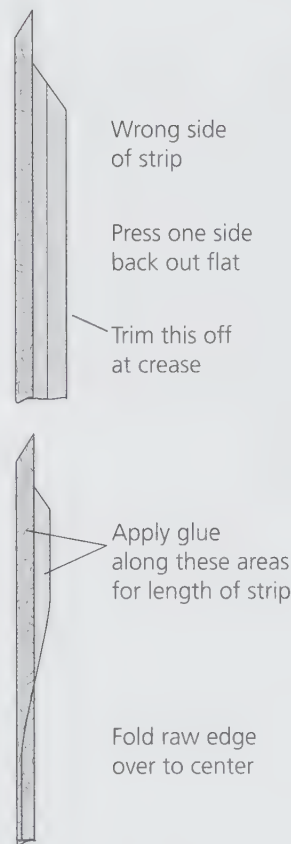
## Skinny stems

You can go this one further to create skinny stems. You'll need the gadget plus a fresh fabric glue stick and a wet towel to wipe your fingers on.

Make a ¼" bias stem as described. Then open out one fold and press it back flat. You will still be able to see the crease. Trim off the fabric just outside the crease.

Now apply glue to the wrong side of the strip and fold and pinch the raw edge back over to the center. It should stick with cheerful obedience. If it doesn't work well for you the first time, use a little more glue or make sure the glue stick is fresh.

If you would prefer to skip the gluing, you can appliqué the folded edge first, then tuck under the raw edge on the other side as you stitch.



## Straight strips

For ¼" straight strips, cut the strips on the straight grain instead of on the bias, and cut them only ½" wide. Then use the gadget the same way.

## Motif preparation

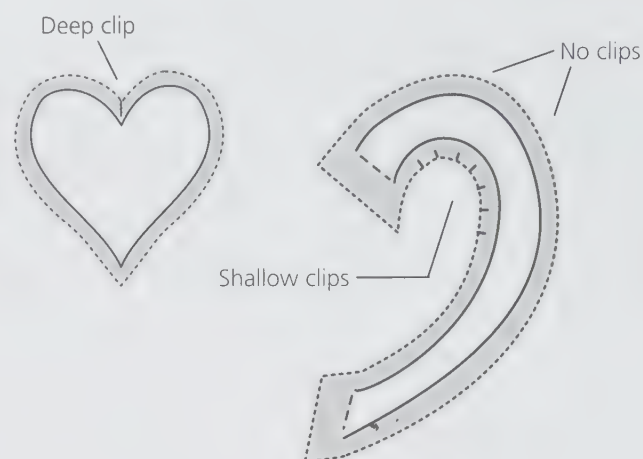
With a dry iron, not overly hot, press the templates shiny-side-down onto the right side of the motif fabrics, leaving at least ½" between templates. Press just long enough for the freezer paper to adhere. A piece of cardboard underneath the fabric helps create a better bond. For most pieces, the grain of the fabric is not important. A bias edge is actually easier to appliqué than a straight-grain edge. For jumbo-size pieces, it's a good idea to orient the templates so that the motif's grain lines match the background fabric's.

Allow fabric and templates to cool briefly. Then, handling as little as possible, cut the motif area apart from the main body of the fabric. Sit down and cut the motifs apart. Then pick up each motif and trim carefully in preparation for appliquéing.

A ¼" margin is actually too much for most appliqué pieces. This amount creates bulk and encourages bumps and blunt-ended points. Leave only about ⅜" margin, even ⅛" for very small pieces. This makes some quilters nervous, but fine work is achieved through this closer trim. Leave extra margin on the dashed-line portions that will be overlapped by other pieces.

## Clipping

In notches, clip almost to the template with the tip of your scissors. Fairly steep inside curves will need a series of shallow clips. Do not clip outer curves.



Keep your motifs in a little box or a file folder. Leave the templates on and handle them as little as possible until ready to sew.

---

## Decision time

This is the point at which you'll decide whether to leave the freezer paper on while sewing or take it off.

Removing the templates means you'll be stitching in traditional needle-turn mode, with no marked line. You'll develop an appliquéer's sense of the right amount to turn under. This is very pleasant stitching, my favorite way to work. However, I do sometimes leave the freezer paper on when I feel the need for extra control over placement and shape.

Note: If you prefer a marked line, you can trace around the templates before removing them.

Stitching with the freezer paper on facilitates precise, flat work. The edge of the paper provides a crisp, identifiable turning line. The stitching technique is the same, though you'll need to tip the sewing line up towards you slightly to avoid sewing through the paper. In some instances the paper actually gets in the way. When this happens, you can fold a portion of the paper back, stitch the area, then replace the paper. I often stitch star points this way. You can also tear away a section of the template or remove the whole thing part-way through if you no longer need it.

## Positioning the motif

Stems, vines, and straight strips are positioned along the previously marked lines on the background fabric (see “Fabric preparation” on page 25). Be sure to leave a generous extra length at each end. You can easily trim off what you don't need later.

Other motifs: Place the motif on the background near where you think it might go. Lay the placement guide on top and align the center marks on all four sides with the marks or creases on the background. Without shifting the placement guide, reach underneath and nudge the motif into place. If the template is on, it will line up exactly with the traced shape. If the template has been removed, adjust the motif until an equal amount of margin is visible all the way around (except for the extra amounts in areas that will be overlapped). Lay the guide back down, re-check the centering marks, and re-check the motif. When all is satisfactory, remove the guide and, without shifting the piece, baste it in place. You can baste right through freezer paper.

## Securing the motif

For stems, vines, and straight strips, I've come to find that glue can be my friend. A little dab of glue stick works well to secure these elements in place for stitching. Or, you can apply fusible after the strips are made, then fuse them in place.

Other motifs: Many accomplished appliqué artists pin them in place while stitching. I find more satisfactory results through basting with needle and thread. It only takes a few seconds to baste each motif in place, then there are no pins to contend with, and the interior of the motif isn't raised up. Baste fairly close to all stitching edges. Then, when the project is folded or rolled to get a proper grip on it, the edges of the motif will not be able to shift.

Basting can sometimes cause appliqué needles to bend, so I often keep a second-tier needle handy for basting. No. 10 straw needles are good basting needles.

---

## Holding the project

When stitching, hold your work from the bottom in your non-sewing hand. This hand should always stay in a neutral position, without bending or twisting the wrist. Fold or roll the project until you can get a good over-and-under grip on the section you're working on, just ahead of where you're stitching. Your thumb is on top and your fingers are underneath. They hold the background and the turned edge of the motif just ahead of where you are placing your stitch.

Adjust your fold/roll/grip as often as necessary to get proper access and angle for your stitching.

Don't let go with your gripping hand. Use your sewing hand to work with the appliqué pieces.

## Supporting the project

Support your work. Holding the project up in midair allows the background fabric to fall away from your hands, which encourages buckling of the appliqué pieces. Use a footstool and sew in your lap, not up close to your face if you can help it. If you need better light or better glasses, gentle quilter, I encourage you to seek ways in which to improve these situations.

The 12" quilter's pressing/cutting mat is an excellent appliqué aid. The hard side serves as a basting surface and the cushioned side supports your hand and the project comfortably while stitching.



## Preparing to stitch

Load your needle with fine thread, not too long, and put a small, tight knot in the end.

Choose the area where you will begin stitching. Motifs that stand alone can be started anywhere, but it is usually best to start on the straightest part. Circles... start anywhere! More about circles later. If the motif is to be overlapped, begin at the point where it first emerges. Leave the overlapped margin unsewn so that you can trim it later if need be.

Right-handed stitchers will sew counterclockwise and left-handers will sew clockwise. Fold or roll the project and get a good grip on the selected area with your non-sewing hand (wrist in a neutral position).

“Needle-turn” appliqué means just that—the margin is turned under with the tip of the needle. I call my personal variation “finger pinch, needle poke.” While holding the needle temporarily in my curled-up second finger, I use forefinger and thumb to tuck and pinch the margin under, less than ½" ahead of where I am stitching. I also use the needle sometimes to make small refinements to the stitching edge.

Try using the needle and try tucking with the finger. Your technique will end up being the one you are most comfortable with and that gives you results you like. A note about needle-turn: Using the needle tends to draw the margin back towards you. Take care not to create a bump in a curve that should be smooth. Finger-tucking tends to chase the margin forward, which for me avoids creating bumpy curves.

## Stitching

Create the first ½" of folded margin and hold it with your gripping hand. Some appliquéers bring the needle up inside the fold. I usually start my thread in the back, bringing my needle up through the background fabric. This first stitch catches a couple of threads of the fold.

Where do you place your needle tip for the next stitch? You won't really be able to see it, but visualize going back in exactly where you just came out. Avoiding the motif edge, insert the needle tip into the background fabric only, just where the current stitch came out.

Push the needle tip forward just slightly, traveling underneath the background fabric. Come back up through the background a very small distance ahead and catch a couple threads of the fold.

“Sink” your stitches. As you pull up the thread after each stitch, give it a gentle hint of a tug. Not so much as to pull up or pucker the piece, just enough to make the stitch sink into the fabric edge.

As you complete a stitch, it helps to pull the thread out at a right angle to the edge of the motif. This helps you gauge exactly where the last stitch came out. Stitches that are placed ahead or behind will be angled stitches, which are longer and more conspicuous.

Each stitch is taken and pulled up individually. There is no modern shortcut in hand appliqué. Speed increases with experience and confidence.

---

## Tying off the thread

On the final stitch, insert the needle through the background and pull it all the way through to the back. Turn the block over. Right next to the thread, take a tiny tack beneath the motif and slowly pull the loop down. Before the loop is closed, put the needle through it, then snug the loop down. Make another tack if you like, but I decided awhile ago that I would save days and years of my life by only doing one. Bury the thread tail by running the needle between the background and the motif before cutting off.

## It's the tip

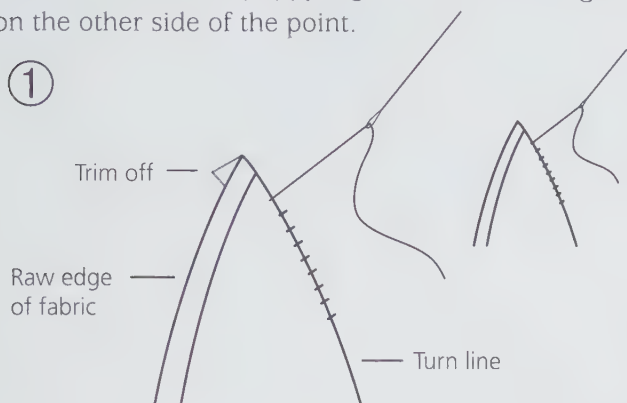
However you sew, by hand or machine, appliquéing or piecing, remember that it's what the tip of the needle is doing that's important. The rest of the needle just follows.



# Points

Sew to within two or three stitches of the point. Trim off the folded-under puppydog ear that is sticking out on the other side of the point.

①



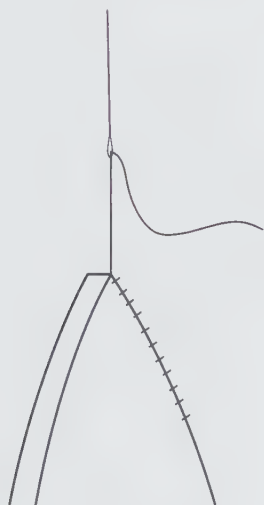
Fold the tip down square across.

②



Take the remaining stitches to the point, the last one coming right out of the tip.

③



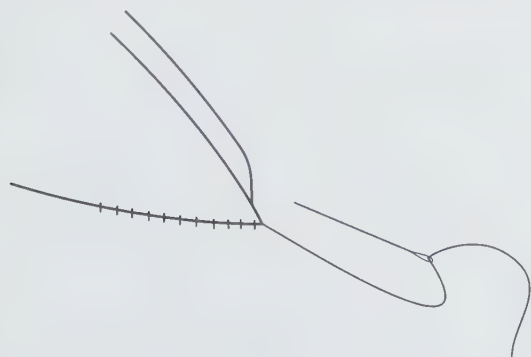
Turn the project.

④



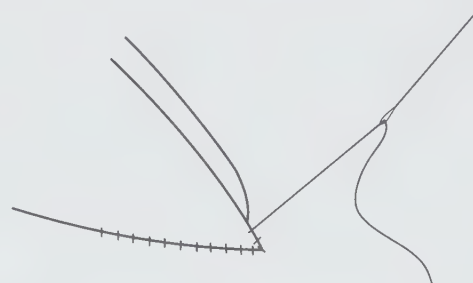
Starting at the point, tuck the margin under. Don't try to start further up and then work down to the point. There will be no room for it. Work from the very point upwards. Chasing the turned margin uphill helps.

⑤



When all is arranged satisfactorily, continue to stitch.

⑥



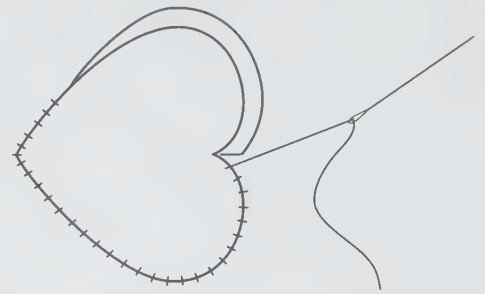
# Notches

Clip almost to the turn line.

①



②

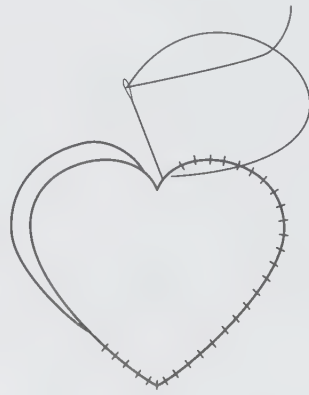


Turn the project. Tuck under the first bit of margin on the other side of the notch. In this illustration, some ornery threads from the motif fabric are sticking up in the notch. The needle is not stitching; it is behind the motif, ready to sweep the loose threads under.

③

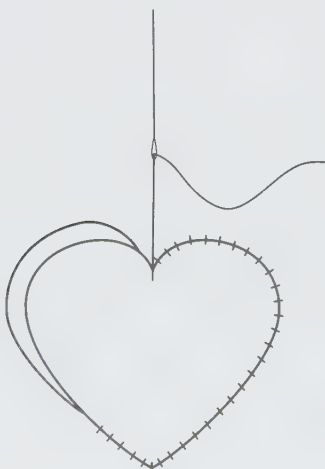


④



Take the remaining stitches down to the notch. The last one, directly in the notch, should pick up three or four threads of the motif fabric.

⑤



⑥



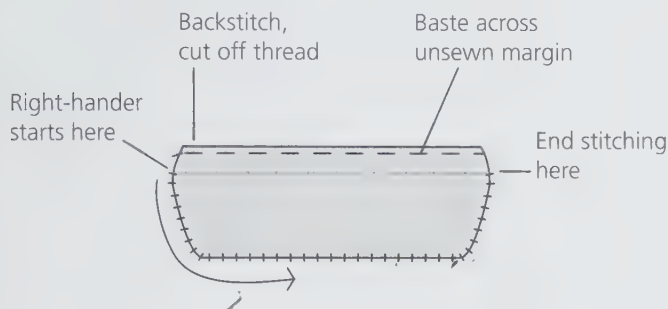
Sew to within two or three stitches of the notch. There will be very little margin in this area. That's okay. Use very small stitches and tuck under any loose threads.

Use the shaft of the needle to sweep across the notch, creating a tiny fold and encouraging any threads to go under. The needle is still not stitching, just sweeping.

Sweep again if necessary. With the tip of the needle, dig under the motif fabric and insert the needle exactly where the current stitch came out. Swing the needle and come out going uphill for the next stitch. Snug the thread down well to create a sharp notch.

## Building the appliqué block

Continue adding pieces in the order you've assigned. Do not stitch areas that are overlapped by other pieces. If the raw edge to be left unsewn is of any size, you can run your thread behind the background up into the margin and baste across it. This usually occurs at the end of the sewing for the piece. In this case, I skip the tying off process and finish with a backstitch. I don't think the motif is going anywhere.



As you complete each piece, remove the main basting thread and the freezer paper if you are using it.

While other forms of “prepared-edge” appliqué allow placement of multiple pieces at a time, I baste and sew one motif at a time, relying on my tissue overlay for accurate placement. You can try placing, basting, and sewing more than one piece. Just be aware that the more the motifs are handled, the more potential for frayed edges and loosened freezer paper.

## Circles

There are tools on the market to help make “perfect” circles. Check the gadget section of your favorite quilt shop. There are also low-tech ways. Some appliquéers use a running stitch to gather the circle around a template, then press a crease into it. I usually just appliqué circles like any other shape, chasing the margin forward until the bitter end, when some back-and-forth adjustment of the last little bit of margin is usually necessary to distribute the bulk, resulting in a smooth bumpless curve.

Circles can also be buttons! Consider using buttons for berries or wheels.

## Removing the background

Cutting away the background fabric behind the motifs is a matter of choice, depending on what kind of appearance you prefer and how you plan to quilt the project.

The size of the motif factors into the decision. Small motifs are not practical to cut out behind and should be left alone. Larger motifs present a choice.

Removing the background layer creates a flatter appearance. If you are building up several layers of appliqué, or plan to hand-quilt on top of the motifs, you may decide it's a good idea. When layering, cut out behind each motif as you go. Otherwise, it's best to wait until just before assembling the quilt, as removing portions of the background fabric can somewhat destabilize the blocks. Handle them carefully afterwards.

Leaving the background in place lends a subtle impression of more dimensionality. This is a fine choice if the project will be machine-quilted or if you prefer a less flat look and you don't mind hand-quilting through an extra layer of fabric.

To cut out behind, pull the background layer away from the motif. Pinch a fold in the background and make a nip through it. Keeping the layers separate and taking care not to cut the motif, use scissors to cut away the background fabric. Leave about a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " inside the stitching line.

## The final trim

When all pieces are stitched and any removal of the background fabric is complete, press the block. To encourage the appliqué forward, place a fluffy towel on the ironing board and lay the block face down on it, then press from the back. This can be especially important if your blocks are embellished.

After pressing, trim the block to its unfinished size. Now start another, fellow appliqué enthusiast!

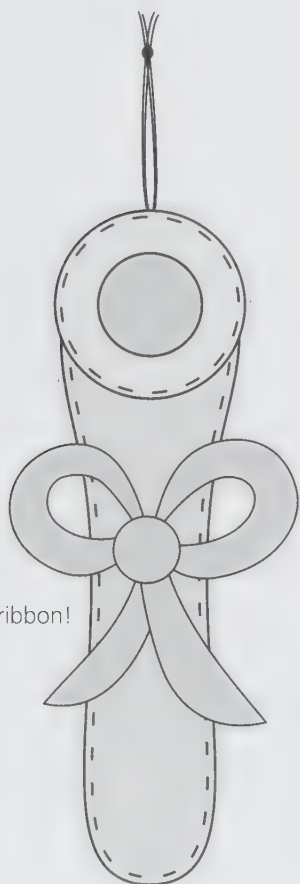
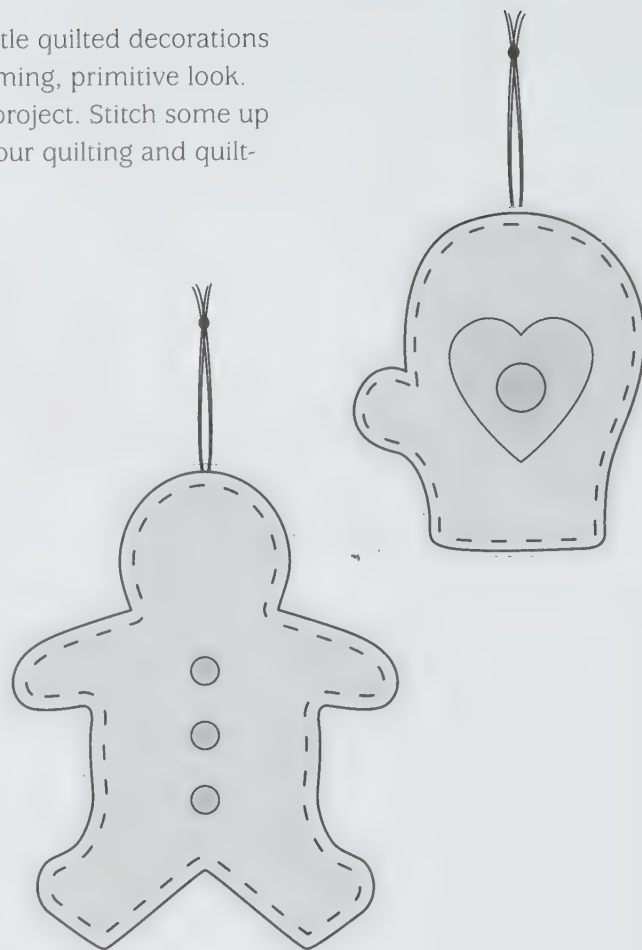


## Hang-ups!

Bring out your scraps and make easy soft ornaments! Little quilted decorations made with raw edges and exposed batting create a charming, primitive look. They're fun to work on and great as a carry-along hand project. Stitch some up to hang on your tree and to stuff in the stockings of all your quilting and quilt-appreciating friends.

**Fusible web:** Following the manufacturer's instructions, prepare the elements of the design. Add a little margin in areas that will be overlapped. Save embellishments like buttons or ribbons for later.

Assemble the design on top of a piece of low-loft cotton batting, rough-cut a little oversized. Use a tracing-paper overlay as a placement guide if desired (see page 26). Fuse the design to the batting.



Make this a real ribbon!

**Finishing:** Lay the design and batting right-side-up on the wrong side of a backing fabric, also rough-cut a little oversized. Pin or baste batting to backing. Or, the layers may stick together of their own accord.

Using embroidery thread in the color of your choice, hand-stitch through all three layers with a big running stitch close to the edge of the design.

Attach buttons, ribbons, or other embellishments as desired.

Cut batting and backing even with front.

Add a hanging loop made with embroidery thread.

Enjoy a cup of hot spiced cider and cross another item off your Christmas list.

# The Sweet Potatoes with the Marshmallows

This retro-ish dish is part of the traditional turkey dinner at our house, with cranberry sauce and stuffing and green-bean casserole, etc. It also goes with ham, and it's just fun to put on the table for any holiday feast.

I combined the most appetizing parts of several recipes to get this to taste like childhood. It serves 6–8, or 2 people several times.

---

6 medium sweet potatoes (the deep orange kind)

¼ cup butter

½ cup brown sugar

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon vanilla

¼ teaspoon cinnamon

pinch of nutmeg

marshmallows (big or mini)

Cut the pointed ends off the sweet potatoes, then cut into circles about 1½" thick. In a big pot, boil sweet potatoes until soft when stuck with a fork. Drain and cool. Remove skins (they will slide right off). In a large casserole dish, place a layer of sweet potatoes, cutting some into wedges to fill in the gaps.

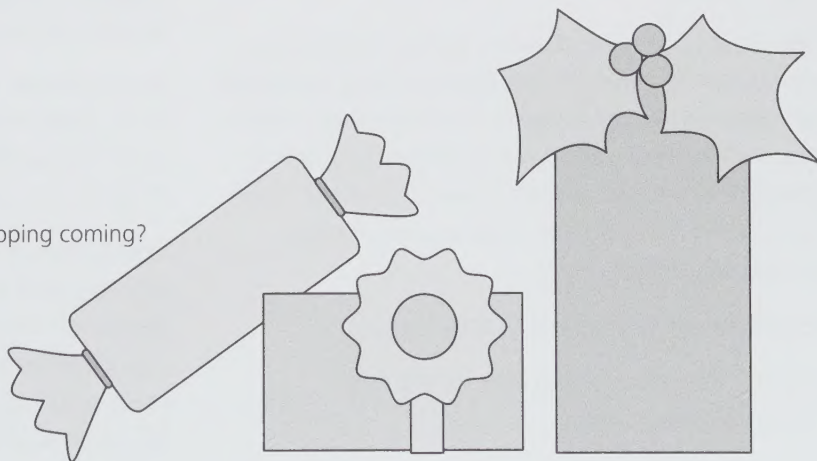
Dot with some of the butter, then sprinkle with some of the salt, spices, and vanilla. Continue to alternate sweet potatoes with flavorings until used up. This is an inexact science.

Cook at 350° for 20 minutes. Top with marshmallows, cook for another 15 minutes or until marshmallows are nicely browned.

Monitor the marshmallows closely toward the end. If they are not browned enough and it's almost time to eat, run the dish under the broiler and watch like a hawk.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Quilt Puppy Publications & Designs.

How's that shopping coming?



# The Particulars

---

## The quilts

All appliqué designs by Kay Mackenzie.  
Individual projects designed by the quiltmaker.

## The quilters

**Pam Crooks** of Soquel, California, is an enthusiastic and prolific appliqué artist. She can never be found without a stitching project or her astounding thread collection. Pam is a member of the Appliqué Goddesses of Silicon Valley.

**Karen Garrett** and **Renae Gleason** are members of the All Star Quilters for Kids, an outreach group of the Pajaro Valley Quilters Association of Santa Cruz County, California. This dedicated team makes and donates bright, cheerful quilts for children in need.

**Janet Locey** of San Juan Bautista, California, is an amazing quiltmaker who is skilled at a number of machine techniques. She teaches classes, organizes quilting retreats, designs and publishes patterns, and has her own on-line business featuring Singer Featherweights in addition to nifty quilting supplies. Read all about it at [www.henscratchquilting.com](http://www.henscratchquilting.com).

## The book

Design, illustrations, and layout by Kay Mackenzie using Adobe® Illustrator®, Photoshop®, and InDesign® on an iMac G5. Title typeface is Bodoni Classic Deco Roman (Wiescher); subtitle is BernhardFasD (Print Explosion). Headings are Frivolous (Typadelic). Text is Usherwood (ITC-Adobe); captions are Frutiger (Linotype AC-Adobe).

Photography by Tony Grant, Santa Cruz.

Printed by Community Printers, Santa Cruz;  
[www.comprinters.com](http://www.comprinters.com).

## The author

**Kay Mackenzie** caught the quilt pox more than twelve years ago and has been working on a quilting project or eight ever since. You are invited to view a gallery of her work at [www.quiltpuppy.com](http://www.quiltpuppy.com). Now Kay combines her love for quilting with her writing and illustrating skills in Quilt Puppy Publications & Designs.

Kay lives with her husband, science journalist Dana Mackenzie, Willie (the real quilt puppy), and three cats in Santa Cruz, California.

## The quilt puppy

Willie, a seven-pound papillon, is the real quilt puppy. He's a very good quilt dog, keeping Kay company in the studio and approving all of her quilts for the qualities that a dog requires. The only thing Willie does not understand is why he cannot sleep on a quilt while it is being quilted.

## Kay's other books

**Growing Hearts to Appliqué** features flowering hearts designs to appliqué using your favorite method.

**Teapots to Appliqué** presents delightful teapot designs for your appliqué pleasure.

**In a Twinkle: Youthful Quilt Designs** features five fresh quilts made "in a twinkle" for the little loved ones in your life, plus a comfy cozy flannel blankie. Projects are suitable for quilters of all levels.

**Dog Cabin: A Fast Fun Theme-Quilt Project** helps you use your favorite theme from today's novelty fabrics to make a refreshingly fast, fun, and easy quilt top. **QuiltersReview.com** says, "It's just plain fun to read" and "the instructions are crystal-clear." Suitable for quilters of all levels, and very beginner-friendly.

Ask for these titles at your favorite quilt shop or visit [www.quiltpuppy.com](http://www.quiltpuppy.com).



# Christmas-time designs

to appliqué using your favorite method



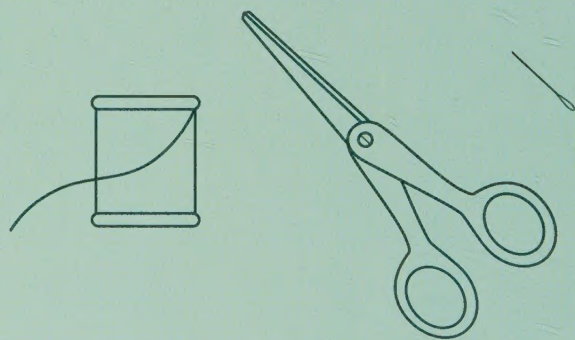
a variety of sizes  
that play nicely together



photos to inspire you  
plus a few other notions



also presented within  
Kay's hand appliqué tips



Quilt Puppy  
Publications & Designs

QPPD5  
\$16.95 U.S.

ISBN 0-9725852-4-9



5 1695 >



9 780972 585248

W3-BOF-836\*